

THE IRONY OF ADVENTISM

The Role of Ellen White and  
Other Adventist Women in Nineteenth  
Century America

A Professional Project

Presented to the Faculty of the  
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Steven Daily

May 1985

c 1985

Steven Daily

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*This professional project, completed by*

Steven G. Daily

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty  
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

*Faculty Committee*

Ann Laves

Alan D. Rhodes

\_\_\_\_\_

March 29, 1985  
Date

Joseph C. Haug  
Dean

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Chapter	
1. The Irony of Adventism (Ellen White and Woman's sacred, subordinate, sphere) . . . . .	14
A. Changing Views of Womanhood in nineteenth century America . . . . .	18
B. Women in Early Adventism. . . . .	31
C. Ellen White and Domesticity . . . . .	44
2. Adventist Women and the Evils of Urbanism . . . . .	58
A. Women, Labor, and Urban Violence. . . . .	61
B. Women and "Satanic Amusements". . . . .	73
C. Ellen White and "Urban-Phobia". . . . .	88
3. Preserving the Vital Force: Adventism and Victorian Sexuality . . . . .	96
A. Vitalism and Sex in Victorian America . . . . .	99
B. Animalism, Onanism, Adventism and Ellen White . . . . .	115
C. Adventist Women and "Social Purity" in the Kellogg era . . . . .	135
4. Feminism, Adventist Women, and Socio- Political Involvement . . . . .	147
A. Feminism and Politics in "Protestant America". . . . .	150
B. Adventism, Feminism and Politics. . . . .	163
C. The WCTU and Adventist Women. . . . .	176
5. Practicing What They Don't Preach (Female Ministry and Fundamentalism). . . . .	193
A. Non-Adventist Women and Ministry. . . . .	198
B. Ellen White and Other Adventist Women . . . . .	217
C. Adventist Women and Church Leadership . . . . .	233
CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS . . . . .	258



## APPENDIX

A. Beyond Ordination: Sexual Inequality and Tokenism in the Adventist Church. . . . .	269
B. Towards An Adventist Theology of Liberation .	298
C. Bibliography . . . . .	335

## PREFACE

At the time of this writing the issue of woman's role, and particularly woman's ordination, is being vigorously discussed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As a lifetime Adventist, and a student of history and social ethics, this author finds the current dialogue over this question to be both exciting and long overdue. The intent of this paper is to contribute to the debate over woman's place in the church/society by providing a historical context for the debate in the church from nineteenth century Adventist and American sources.

It is also the intent of this work to further contribute to the ongoing discussion over Ellen G. White's role and authority within the Adventist Church. How did she as a woman, relate to questions of woman's rights? It is this writer's opinion that Ellen White's influence on Seventh-day Adventism has touched nearly every aspect of Adventist thinking. She is to Adventism what Luther was to Lutheranism, and Wesley was to Methodism. This maternal influence is indeed also evident in the topic at hand. We must not be satisfied with asking, what did she say? but, Why did she say what she said, and how can the church maturely interpret her writings, today, in a manner that is both Biblical and beneficial to the community of faith.

Although this is a historical study it may be helpful to the reader to understand that it proceeds from the following convictions:

1. That Ellen G. White was both a visionary and a recipient of the prophetic gift (not all prophets are visionaries). Therefore her special sensitivity to God's spirit benefitted her religious community and was recognized by it.
2. That divine truths are revealed through supernatural means which are not subject to naturalistic explanations or understood apart from faith. Those who profess to receive such revelations must always be tested by scripture and subjected to the revealed authority of Jesus Christ.
3. That the life and works of Ellen White have done more to benefit and edify the Adventist community, than misinterpretations, and misuse of her writings have done to harm the community.
4. That the Adventist church has been more inclined to appeal to the writings of Ellen White for direction in matters of doctrine, and personal ethics, (to the point of overdependency) than it has in matters of social ethics.
5. That the writings of Ellen G. White are most valuable for the church today, when they are realistically seen to be fallible works which provide important moral principles originally given in a nineteenth century context,

as opposed to detailed specific counsel for the nineteen-eighties.

Finally, this study is not intended to be a critique of Ellen G. White or Adventism. This writer is heavily indebted and committed to both the church and the prophet. Adventism has much to be proud of, and much to share with other religious communities, in terms of its message, mission work, system of stewardship, educational program, and medical/health care institutions. But it also has much to learn, particularly in regards to issues concerning social justice, and the ethics of equality. It is the hope of this author that the following work might contribute in some small way to the realization of such growth.

## ABSTRACT

Adventist sabbatarians first emerged on the American scene in the 1840's after the great Millerite disappointment. This sectarian religious movement formed an identity through intense Bible study and the visionary pronouncements of a young charismatic prophetess named Ellen White. It was during this same decade that the woman's rights movement burst into prominence in the United States, thanks to the highly publicized Seneca Falls Conference.

Unlike most nineteenth century sectarian religions dominated by the charismatic teachings of a woman, Adventists failed to promote egalitarianism and refused to allow women, other than Ellen White, to occupy positions of authority within the movement. Adventism also opposed woman's rights and suffrage largely because of the testimonies of their prophetess. The ironic elevation of a single woman, combined with a simultaneous subordination of women in general, by Seventh-day Adventists, raises questions as to what developments motivated this seemingly inconsistent behavior.

Available historical evidence points to five factors, all closely related to the teachings of Ellen White, which contributed to the general subordination of Adventist women

in the nineteenth century. These factors also help to explain the continuing denial of full female equality, which has characterized the movement, in the twentieth century. First, Adventism's acceptance of the popular nineteenth century belief, advocated by Ellen White, that women were ordained by God to occupy a separate subordinate sphere from men, certainly undermined woman's position in the church.

Secondly, this strong belief in domesticity was reinforced by Adventism's extreme commitment to ruralism and suspicion of urbanization.

Thirdly, Adventists subscribed to various victorian theories concerning sexuality which reinforced stereotypical prejudices against women in the nineteenth century.

Fourthly, the factor of socio-political isolationism, though it was not always consistently observed, certainly contributed to Adventism's refusal to support the cause of equal rights for women. And finally, Adventism's roots in fundamentalism also contributed to the movement's subordination of women. Another look at the teachings of Ellen White, studied in the context of the above mentioned historical factors, may allow the modern reader to reflect on this issue of sexual equality from a new perspective.

## INTRODUCTION

Hans Kung, the reknown German theologian, recently described the question of sexual role definition and function in relationship to woman's liberation, as the most pressing and important issue facing western culture today.<sup>1</sup> Should women be granted absolute equality with men, in terms of rights and opportunities, or should society continue to preserve the traditional sexual distinctions of the past? This is a question that not only challenges Seventh-day Adventists, but demands the attention of every other church, and institution, in the western world. Many issues, such as sexual wage discrimination, job discrimination, equal rights, sexual abuse and harassment, and woman's ordination, which have been raised by feminists in recent years, first surfaced in American thought during the last half of the nineteenth century. The women and men who worked for social justice in the United States between 1840 and 1925 with a vision of egalitarianism ever before them, were the pioneers of the modern woman's rights movement. Through their efforts woman's suffrage finally became a reality, opening many doors to women that would never fully

---

<sup>1</sup> Hans Kung, I. A. C. Lecture (Dec. 13, 1983), School of Theology at Claremont.

be shut again. This study attempts to examine the role of women in the Seventh-day Adventist church during this victorian and transitional period in American history.

It was during the last half of the nineteenth century, and the first decades of the twentieth century, that the American nation was transformed from a country predominantly composed of white, anglo-saxon protestants into a racially and religiously amalgamated society. The contemporaneous shift from a rural agrarian socio-economic structure to an urban, industrially oriented culture, produced a trend towards secularization which permanently altered the American mentality. These factors, coupled with the explosive increase in scientific knowledge, brought about changes which threatened to destroy the moral fiber of "protestant America," and the authority that the religious establishment had enjoyed in previous decades, and centuries. The woman's rights movement was a by product of the social upheaval that characterized this era.

The thesis of this professional project is that the ironic tendency within Seventh-day Adventism, to elevate Ellen White to the most prominent position in the church while it simultaneously subordinated women in general, can be traced not only to the movement's theological pre-suppositions, but to its roots in nineteenth century domesticity, ruralism, victorianism and fundamentalism. And that such an inconsistent practice needs to be addressed and



resolved by the church today. Although this thesis is presented in a particular historical context, it suggests a host of implications which help to address the contemporary question of why Adventists have been so slow to accept a prominent role for women in church leadership, when the most prominent and influential figure in Adventist history (past and present) was a woman. The study deals with the problem of sexual inequality as it is specifically related to church leadership, ministry, ordination, and christian ethics in the context of historical Adventist theology/practice and victorian American culture between 1850 and 1925.

The problem is an important one for Adventists because the General Conference leadership in North America has persisted in its refusal to ordain women, or to give them any kind of significant representation within the major decision making bodies of church government, in spite of the fact that they make up approximately 60% of the denomination's membership. This is a serious situation because it means that three-fifths of the resource persons available in the church are not being allowed to fully develop their potential, or utilize their gifts. In spite of the significant shift in attitudes, which has produced a "raised consciousness" concerning human rights and sexual equality in most christian denominations, and in society at large, during the last decade, Adventism has pursued a course of hesitancy and uncertainty with regard to women.

There are proportionally fewer women occupying high leadership positions in the church today, than was the case in the period under consideration in this study, or in the 1930's and 40's. It seems that Adventism must rethink and revise its present position on ordination and church leadership, concerning women, if it is to harmonize its theology of wholism and spiritual gifts, with current church policy. It is my hope that this study will provide a helpful historical framework which will lead to such an end.

Definitions of the following terms have been provided for readers who may not be familiar with feminist and nineteenth century literature.

Abolitionism - Refers to the advocacy of freedom for slaves, or insistence upon the termination of the practice of slavery in the United States. This, of course, was a major social movement in nineteenth century America.

Androgyny - This term is a combination of the Greek words for man (aner) and women (gune). It is often used to represent an ideal blending of masculine and feminine traits together. Literally, it is defined as having male and female characteristics in one. Though some radical feminists, such as Mary Daly, have rejected this term as confusing and misbegotten, it remains an important word in literature on sexuality.

Biblical Ethics - The study of morality as it was understood and applied by the Biblical writers and their communities. Until the 1930's Biblical ethics and Christian Ethics were assumed to be synonymous in theological circles. The former supplied the latter with an unchanging normative content. For liberals and Fundamentalists the Bible was either a book or the book, of revealed morality. During the 1930's and 40's ethicists began to view the Bible, not as a book of revealed morality, but as a book of revealed reality. Under the influence of these developments most of the recent works on Biblical ethics have been descriptive.

They describe the ethical perspectives and struggles of the ancient Biblical communities.

Christian Ethics - The study of contemporary ethical issues in the context of Scriptural principles, Christian church history, and an existential openness to the Holy Spirit and commitment to God's revealed will in Christ. The cultural and historical "conditioned-ness" of Scripture prevents any blind or absolute application of Biblical morality to the questions and problems raised today, which were either unknown or inadequately dealt with in Biblical times (examples: overpopulation, environmental pollution, bioethics, and Biblical codes concerning capital punishment, slavery, women, etc.).

Domesticity - Refers to the practice of placing a premium on the importance of motherhood, the family, and child rearing. It is a devotion to home life and the duties that it entails. In nineteenth century America, women were generally expected to fill such a domestic role, and this work was elevated, in an unprecedented manner, to a high status in the religious literature of the day.

Egalitarianism - A philosophy of government which favors absolute political and social equality. Biblical support for such an ideal, revolutionary system is often drawn from Galatians 3:28. This text is often considered to be the Scriptural magna charta for women and human rights in general.

Fundamentalism - A name attached to the conservative Christian movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which resisted all liberal or modernist attempts to modify the fundamental beliefs or orthodox teachings of the protestant churches. It particularly upheld the inerrancy or infallibility of the Bible.

Wholistic Theology - A view of human nature and life which stresses the harmony of God's creation in contrast to Greek hierarchial ethics and dualistic thought. In this philosophy, all of the individual aspects of human existence (the mental, physical, social, spiritual and emotional components) are essential, and to be harmoniously developed in the interest of overall health (the division between soul and body is rejected). Similarly, there is no natural descending order to creation, but a potential unity and harmony between the environment and all life forms which must be respected and continually strived for as the ethical

ideal. Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally claimed to advocate such a theology.

Liberation Theology - A theological perspective which understands the essence of religion in terms of God's deliverance of the oppressed and the powerless, and therefore seeks the freedoms of fully embodied human existence. Such theological movements represent a broad range of ethnic, sexual, and socio-economic concerns.

Misogyny - Literally, the hatred of women. A very popular term used by feminists to describe the negative attitudes towards women which are perpetuated and constantly reinforced in patriarchal cultures.

Prohibitionism - The temperance and social reform movement which attempted to ban the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. It gained great momentum in the nineteenth century and offered a highly visible prominence to woman's organizations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

Ruralism - Refers to the belief that country living is preferable and superior to city or urban existence. This view enjoyed great popularity in the nineteenth century, particularly among conservative Christians.

Shalom - The Hebrew word that summarized the global and communal vision of harmony, wholeness, joy, peace, and equality which God challenges His people with in Scripture, as the all embracing ideal of His creation, covenant, and salvific work.

Sex role - This term refers to the set of behaviors and characteristics widely viewed as 1) typical of women or men (sex role stereotypes), and 2) desirable for women or men (sex role norms). For example, males are characterized as being more aggressive and emotionally inexpressive.

Sex typing - Sex role stereotypes and norms are beliefs held about men and women as social groups. Sex typing, by contrast, refers to the actual characteristics of a particular individual along sex role related dimensions.

Social Purity Movement - A popular crusade in nineteenth century America, led by Anthony Comstock and others, which attempted to purge, censor, or prohibit the open circulation of birth control information and devices,

pornography, and various other practices deemed to be socially harmful.

Victorianism - For the purposes of this study, refers to the American adoption of the behaviors, qualities and attitudes prominent in England during the era of Queen Victoria. The term has traditionally been associated with prudishness, stuffiness, and highly ornamented externalism in dress and manner.

Woman's Rights and Suffrage - This movement first emerged in America in the nineteenth century, gaining momentum after the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. It basically agitated for the same goal of full equality for women, which characterizes the feminist or woman's liberation movement today. Its most significant accomplishment was the attainment of woman's suffrage, or woman's right to vote, in 1920.

To a great degree this study is based on research into "virgin territory." It is the first attempt to examine the major Adventist periodicals, between 1850 and 1925, with particular attention given to The Review and Herald, that deal with the subject of women in the church. The only secondary sources which even briefly deal with the question of woman's ordination or feminism, in relationship to Ellen White or nineteenth century Adventist women in general, do so only superficially or cover it as a side issue. The only published book, specifically related to the role of Adventist women in the nineteenth century, is a popular history written by a layman, which attempts to survey the contributions that various women made in the church's denominational history. (It is John Beach's Notable Women of Spirit (1976).) In terms of unpublished materials, Ron Graybill's recent Ph.D. dissertation, The Power of Prophecy,

contains a chapter which touches on Ellen White's relationship to feminism, and gives some valuable information about her family relationships. In the mid 1970's a number of Adventist scholars also produced papers, which have not been published or circulated, on the subject of woman's contemporary role within Adventism. But no detailed historical work was done in nineteenth century Adventism. Even the papers which discussed some of Ellen White's quotations, did not deal with them in their nineteenth century context. Finally, one masters thesis was completed in November of 1981 by Isaac Suarez, which was entitled Women's Role and Ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This poorly researched document focuses on twentieth century Adventism, and concludes that the church "must abstain from ordination [for women] without a universal consensus, and without first formulating a sound ordination theology" (p. 111). Such a conclusion ignores the theological work done by Adventist scholars in the 1970's. The work also fails to provide a balanced picture of Ellen White's views, or to put her statements in a proper historical context.

Although some of the material drawn upon, to supply a general historical background for this study, was obtained by researching primary sources such as nineteenth century books and periodicals outside of Adventism, I have relied primarily on the wealth of excellent secondary sources

available in the field of woman's studies and American religious and social history, to meet this need. All sources have been credited in the notes and bibliography. This study is intended to be an interpretive work, which integrates the historical method, in terms of providing evidence from the nineteenth, and early twentieth, century, with the evaluative tools of christian social ethics. I will not only attempt to ask what happened and why, but will attempt to evaluate what happened in the light of biblical and christian principles of social justice, which suggest contemporary applications for the Adventist church. Although this is not an exhaustive study, in terms of providing a comprehensive account of the individual roles that various significant Adventist women played, in the period under study, it is intended to be a carefully researched study of primary and secondary historical sources that will compare and contrast the role that Ellen White played within Adventism with her female contemporaries.

I have entitled this work, The Irony of Adventism, because available historical evidence suggests a significant discrepancy between what Ellen White said, concerning woman's role, and counseled specific Adventist women to do, and what she did herself. This study is not intended to be a critique of Ellen White's role in Adventism, but rather an attempt to better understand the historical complexities, which contributed to her views and actions, and led

Adventists to take the positions they did concerning women. Such an understanding should be of value to the Adventist church, today, as it struggles with the question of woman's place in the community of faith. Chapter One will discuss Adventism's deep commitment to separate sexual spheres, and its belief in God ordained domestic roles for women, in the light of Ellen White's testimonies and general nineteenth century thought. The gap between the narrow domestic sphere, that was prescribed for Adventist women in general, will be contrasted with the non-traditional role that Ellen White modeled in her own life as mother, wife, and leader in the Advent movement.

Chapter Two will focus on the disproportionately rural nature of Adventism in the nineteenth century, and how this factor affected the church's attitude towards women. The phobia concerning urbanism, which was evident in the writings of Ellen White, and directly connected with the denomination's views on issues such as woman's dress, standards of entertainment, amusement, sexual conduct and modesty, certainly affected the role that women occupied within Adventism and seemed to be much more extreme than what was found in the protestant churches in general.

The third chapter will consider victorian concepts concerning sexuality, which were related to the general subordination that women experienced during this period in American history. The tremendous popularity of vitalistic



theories, in the nineteenth century, had a very significant influence on the thinking of both Ellen White and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, who were the two outstanding Adventist spokespersons on the subject of sexuality, between 1850 and 1925. Adventists were taught that women were born with a smaller quantity of the life giving "vital force," which was considered to be the source of mental and physical health. By nature, they were thought to be more vulnerable to diseases than men. The common references to woman being the "weaker sex" were not simply applied to the question of physical strength, but to the general biological weaknesses attributed to the more deficient vital energies that women were thought to possess. Men, on the other hand, were accused of possessing greater "animalistic passions" than women, leaving them indefensible against female temptations caused by "immodest dress." Women were held responsible for the maintenance of "social purity" and sexual morality.

Chapter Four discusses the tremendous contributions which women made in the political arena, and in the social reform movements of the nineteenth century. It describes the emergence of the woman's rights movement, and Adventism's response to it. Ironically, Ellen White was, on the one hand, a socio-political activist, who advocated civil disobedience in connection with the cause of abolition, and a leading spokesperson in the Women's Christian Temperance Union which strongly promoted

prohibition, while on the other hand, she opposed woman's suffrage and cautioned against Adventist political involvement when the church began to follow her lead and move in that direction. This chapter will examine how the contradictory views which existed in nineteenth century Adventism towards social reforms and politics affected women in the church.

The final chapter will attempt to examine the question of woman's ordination, and involvement in church leadership and ministry, in the context of nineteenth century protestantism, and Adventist fundamentalism. The pattern of this discussion will be similar to that established in the previous chapters. First, we will focus on what was occurring outside of Adventism, in the churches and general culture, which had a definite effect on Adventists. Then we will look at the specific statements and actions of Ellen White, and notice how her behavior fit with the model of active female ministry, but how her words on the subject ultimately served to undermine the cause of woman's ordination to full gospel ministry. Finally, the chapter will explore some of the frustrations that Adventist women in general experienced, during the period under study, by considering the cases of certain ladies who expressed their feelings in diaries, lecture halls, and even General Conference assemblies. Their experiences seem remarkably similar to what so many Adventist women, today, are

struggling with, as they ask the question, will the church see fit to fully utilize the God given gifts of women, and thereby declare that all human barriers, including sexual barriers, have been broken down by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER ONE

## THE IRONY OF ADVENTISM

(Ellen White and Woman's Sacred Subordinate Sphere)

We may safely say that the distinctive duties of woman are more sacred, more holy than those of man. Let woman realize the sacredness of her work and in the strength and fear of God take up her life mission. Let her educate her children for usefulness in this world and for a home in the better world... The king upon his throne has no higher work than has the mother... An angel could not ask for a higher mission;<sup>1</sup> for in doing this work she is doing service for God.

This statement, along with many others from the pen of Ellen White, perfectly reflects the widely held nineteenth century belief that woman was designated by God to occupy a domestic sphere that was both separate from, and superior to, the public sphere of man. In her published writings, which contain more than 2,000 statements dealing with the nature of motherhood and true womanhood, the domestic duties and privileges of woman are exalted above every other human activity or occupation. Woman's work in the home is her 'greatest responsibility,' her 'first great business,' it is the highest earthly calling and the most sacred, important,

---

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1890) 77. See also Signs of the Times (March 16, 1891).

duty assigned by God to human beings.<sup>2</sup> In addition to her lifelong emphasis on the God ordained domestic responsibilities of woman, Ellen White also strongly supported the view that all women were placed in a subordinate position to men as a result of Eve's sin and the fall. She maintained that God placed woman in "subjection to man" though she generally qualified this sexual "submission" with the candid admission that men were often prone to "abuse the supremacy" granted them.<sup>3</sup>

What makes this typical nineteenth century emphasis on woman's superior moral influence, and subordinate status, rather ironic in the case of Ellen White is the inconsistency and tension between what she advocated, and what she practiced. There is a significant contrast between the ideal picture of womanhood that is presented by those who contributed to Adventist Literature between 1850 and 1925 and the role model provided by Ellen White. Her prominent role seems to differ sharply from the position

---

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White Fundamentals of Christian Education (Nashville: Southern Publ., 1890, 1923) 158-59. "Missionaries in the Home" (1876), in her Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948) IV, 138. The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905, 1942) 377-378. The Adventist Home (Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1952) 231-243, 264-269.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Washington Review and Herald, Publ. 1890, 1958) 58, 59. Testimonies III, 484. Adventist Home, 115.

which women generally occupied within Adventism, and were encouraged to pursue.

First of all, Ellen White often found it necessary to leave her children for prolonged periods of time (even during their earliest years), contrary to her own advice, because of the demands that her career or position in the church made upon her. Secondly, on various occasions Ellen stood up to her husband, James, or pursued a course in direct opposition to his wishes, in spite of her statements concerning submission, because she felt that her convictions took priority over her husband's. Finally, there is an obvious tension between the fact that Ellen subscribed to the notion of "separate spheres," but continuously "transcended" the female sphere in order to fulfill what she believed was her God ordained vocation or calling. These conflicts will be explored later in the chapter.

Unlike the great majority of female religious leaders and reformers, in the nineteenth century, Ellen White did not support egalitarianism in society, church or family, nor did she attempt to challenge other women to broaden their roles in ways that would threaten traditional domesticity. Donald Kennon has observed that when compared with other female reformers, such as Sara Parton, Mary Nichols, Lucy Stone, Abby Foster, Eliza Farnham, Elizabeth Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Susan Anthony, etc., Ellen G. White stood as a notable exception in her acceptance of traditional roles

for women in both society and the home.<sup>4</sup>

It is also striking that women who founded churches or played very prominent roles in religious movements of the nineteenth century such as Ann Lee, Alma White, Mary Baker Eddy, Catherine Booth, Jemima Wilkenson, Francis Willard, Phoebe Palmer, etc., all either openly fought for women's rights or significantly contributed to the expansion of woman's role in society in contrast to Ellen G. White. The fact that Adventism emerged and grew in an extremely male dominated environment tempts one to speculate that the young prophetess had no freedom to expand woman's role, because of the restrictive male influences all around her. However, it can also be argued that Seventh-day Adventists failed to encourage a broader role for women primarily because of the counsel and instruction of the prophetess. Undoubtedly, both theories contain some truth. But even in the nineteenth century, it was certainly rare for any woman to exercise an authoritative position in male dominated churches or movements.

Barbara Heineman (Landmann) played a similar role to Ellen White among the Amana Inspirationists, an obscure German pietist sect which was also totally run by men, but

---

<sup>4</sup> Donald Kennon, A Knit of Identity: Marriage and Reform in Mid-Victorian America (Ph.D. Dissertation University of Maryland Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1981) 96, 471 ff.

with this exception it is difficult to find any religious group controlled by men where a woman occupied such a dominant position. So there were unique relationships between Ellen White, Adventist male leadership, women in the church and the Victorian Ideology of the day in the period under study. The rest of the chapter will focus on these relationships in the context of nineteenth century American culture and Adventist subculture.

#### CHANGING VIEWS OF WOMANHOOD

A prophetess and prolific writer like Ellen White could not have emerged in seventeenth or eighteenth century American culture. Public opinion would not have allowed any woman to attain such a position of prominence. Even as late as 1835 New England women:

endured subordination to men in marriage and society, profound disadvantage in education and in the economy, denial of access to official power in the churches they populated, and virtual impotence in politics... Woman's public life generally was so minimal that if one addressed a mixed audience she was greeted with shock and hostility.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this general prejudice against women occupying any kind of public role, it was also commonly believed and taught prior to the nineteenth century, that women were morally inferior to men. They were seen as the

---

<sup>5</sup> Nancy Cott The Bonds of Womanhood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 5.



source of sexual temptation, the enticing, engulfing force that would devour men and swallow them up into the cavities of hell.<sup>6</sup> The heritage of puritan New England placed a tremendous emphasis on the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin. Puritanism maintained that all human beings were sinful by nature, but this was particularly true of women. Women were not generally considered to be the equals of men, nor were they ever to challenge their subordinate status in society, and the family, regardless of their individual talents or abilities. Women were continually reminded by ministers and other men in positions of authority that sexual subordination was the result of divine order. A typical example of eighteenth century teaching on this subject is the following excerpt from a treatise written for women by Benjamin Wadsworth, a prominent New England minister:

The husband is called the head of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). It belongs to the head, to rule and govern. Those wives are much to blame, who don't carry it lovingly and obediently toward their own husbands... Though possibly thou has greater abilities of mind than he has, wast of some high birth, and he of a more mean extract; or didst bring more estate at marriage than he did;

---

<sup>6</sup> Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child Rearing Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America (New York: Meridian, 1977) 132,133. See also Barbara Epstein The Politics of Domesticity (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981) 38-44.

yet since he is thy husband,<sup>7</sup> God has made him thy head, and set him over thee.

In spite of the fact that Eighteenth century women demonstrated greater religiosity or inclinations towards spirituality than men<sup>8</sup>, they were still perceived as the more affected victims of natural depravity, due to the "greater responsibility of woman" in original sin. In the words of Barbara Epstein,

Every New England school child knew that it was Eve who had tempted Adam and that it was therefore Eve who had ultimate responsibility for the fall. Puritan ministers were given to reminding women of the special onus that lay upon them because of this, their special responsibility for the taint that this disobedient act had brought upon the human race and upon carnality itself. The notion that women were especially accountable for lost innocence was easily translated into an idea that sexuality<sup>9</sup> was somehow especially connected with women.

In the nineteenth century all of this changed. Woman, who had been denied any significant public role in the past, carved out her own sphere of influence. While still excluded from much of political and public life, she became a prominent and sometimes authoritative figure on the subjects of child rearing, homelife, religion, temperance, social

---

<sup>7</sup> Benjamin Wadsworth, The Well-Ordered Family (Boston, 1712) 35.

<sup>8</sup> Amanda Porterfield, Feminine Spirituality in America (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980) 19-50. Nancy Cott, 126-128.

<sup>9</sup> Epstein, 42.

purity, and related areas of social reform. These changes came about as the result of profound social movements that transformed american culture and concepts of womanhood. In the early nineteenth century, Puritanism had been replaced by Jacksonian democracy, communalism had generally given way to rugged individualism, deference to egalitarianism, and ruralism was faced with a new industrial-urban society that would revolutionize the economy through its emphasis on commercial capitalism. These changes coupled with increased immigration and new trends towards secularization, particularly reflected in male attitudes and educational curriculums, would cause most americans to experience what Williams McLoughlin refers to as a "cultural identity crisis,"<sup>10</sup> resulting in a search for new definitions that could provide cultural security or social stability.

The old religious ideology typified by the New England Primer which taught, "in Adam's fall/we sinned all," was abandoned in the early nineteenth century. New textbooks appeared which stressed a more secular, individualistic and patriotic ideology. Every young man (not woman) was challenged to take advantage of the freedom and opportunities for independence that urban society presented, through

---

<sup>10</sup> William McLoughlin, "Revivalism," in Edwin Ganstad (ed.) The Rise of Adventism (New York:Harper & Row, 1974) 119-153; see also William McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1959)

industry, frugality, ambition and assertiveness the road to wealth and self-sufficiency was to be found.

The colonial farm woman who had played such an important economic role in eighteenth century America, for the most part lost her crucial position in industrial society. This led to a new emphasis in American culture on the importance of motherhood, child-rearing and home making. The domestic duties assigned to woman were elevated in status to make them appear more attractive to those (women) who were excluded from the adventures and opportunities of urban-industrial society. The Calvinistic mind set, which had stressed the fall and identified woman as the source of temptation and original sin, was minimized or rejected in favor of a much more spiritual view of womanhood. Mothers became the sacred guardians of Christian society.

Secularization shifted the great responsibility of preserving the protestant heritage of America to the home. Women were constantly reminded that they could exert the greatest and most powerful influence over the nation without leaving the house, through the training of their children, particularly sons. In his influential book, The Mother at Home; or The Principles of Maternal Duty, John Abbot informed his readers that, "the female breast is the natural

soil of Christianity."<sup>11</sup> Positive womanhood became synonymous with warmth, affection, nurture, care, spirituality, sensitivity, and moral superiority. In the words of Ann Douglas, "Between 1820 and 1875, in the midst of the transformation of the American economy into the most powerfully aggressive capitalist system in the world, American culture seemed bent on establishing a perpetual Mother's Day."<sup>12</sup>

Maternal domination of the american home coupled with the decline and disestablishment of clerical authority and the rise of ladies magazines and popular women's literature, allowed nineteenth century women to carve out a domestic and moral sphere of authority, which gave them a limited public voice, and removed their former Calvinistic stigma of spiritual inferiority. Women applied the moral principles used to govern home life to society in general, a phenomenon referred to as "social homemaking" or "social feminism." They attempted to broaden their sphere of influence and to become experts in "Domestic Science", but as Douglas points out, "the cult of motherhood, like the Mother's Day it eventually established in the american calendar, was an

---

<sup>11</sup> John C. Abbott, The Mother At Home; or, The Principles of Maternal Duty (Boston, 1833), p. 147.

<sup>12</sup> Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1977), p. 6.

essential precondition to the flattery american women were trained to demand in place of justice and equality.<sup>13</sup> The same cultural environment which allowed Ellen White to occupy an authoritative role within Adventism, and to author some 90 books on the subjects of temperance, religion and domesticity, was also responsible for producing a cultural climate where the great majority of Adventists women were conditioned and expected to remain in their homes as faithful mothers and obedient wives.

Just as changing social and cultural conditions in nineteenth century America enabled a woman like Ellen White to generate a significant prophetic following, and strongly contributed to her emphasis on domestic or limited roles for women, so Ellen White and Adventist women in general were also affected and influenced by trends in the protestant churches. With the dethronement of religion as queen of sciences, in the early 1800's, the strict orthodoxy of Calvinism was replaced with a compassionate and devotional form of theology. The decline of clerical authority coupled with the societal changes previously mentioned produced a religion that became increasingly identified with the gentle traits attributed to womanhood.

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 75; for more information on the "Social Homemaking" movement see, Julie Matthael, An Economic History of Women in America (New York; Schocken, 1982) 17, 18.

The protestant churches and their teachings were refashioned in response to their growing female memberships, a phenomenon referred to as the "feminization of American religion."<sup>14</sup> In the nineteenth century women became a dominant force in the protestant churches, while a disproportionately high percentage of female members occupied American protestant churches even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,<sup>15</sup> their majority status was not accompanied by any comparable or significant influence in the churches. However, in the nineteenth century various studies suggest that New England protestanism experienced not only a dramatic and unprecedented increase in female membership percentages,<sup>16</sup> but a corresponding feminine component evident in the message and mission of the churches

---

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Welter, The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860, Lois Banner Ed., Clio's Consciousness Raised (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973). See also Nancy Cott, Bonds, 126-146. Ann Douglas, Feminization, 77-141.

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Morgan, "New England Puritanism: Another Approach," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 18 (April, 1961), 236-42. Mary Dunn, "Saints and Sisters," American Quarterly 30 (Winter 1978), 583-601.

<sup>16</sup> Between 1800-1835 the percentage of female membership in New England churches ranged between 65%-73% an all time high. See Richard Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism, 1730-1835," American Quarterly 33:1 (Spring 1981) 47-62. Mary Ryan, "A Woman's Awakening," in Janet Wilson James (ed.) Women in American Religion, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980) 89-110.

as well. While this trend towards "feminization" did not occur with the same force in all denominations, or in frontier revivalism, it nevertheless was a significant phenomenon in American religion.

Another important and related factor that emerged in nineteenth century protestantism was the growing disparity between male and female religious experience. According to the research of Barbara Epstein, there was no obvious sexual distinction relating to conversion experiences in American revivals before 1800. Feminine consciousness played little or no part in the religious life of American communities, which were predominantly rural. But with the dawning of industrial society masculine religiosity declined considerably, most men who professed conversion were heavily influenced by wives, mothers or daughters and those who maintained a personal religious commitment tended to place a premium on emotional restraint, and to resist or reject the Calvinistic emphasis on pre-destination and original sin. The majority of males were frequently either uninterested in religion or actively opposed to it, young men especially often ridiculed converts, refused to attend church, and conspired to break up revivals in progress.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Epstein, 45-55; one weakness of Epstein's study is that she says virtually nothing about Methodist Revivalism which seemed to be less decided along sexual lines in terms



By contrast, early nineteenth century revivalism in New England proved to be tremendously successful with women. Female conversions dramatically increased during the first decades of the century, as thousands flocked to the altars of revival preachers to confess their sins. The religious experience of women during this period was characterized by intense anxiety, introspection and emotionalism.<sup>18</sup> While most men were resisting the fear inspiring doctrines of Calvinism, women tended to cling to those aspects of the old religion which focused their attention on how unworthy and desperately wicked they were. Records from diaries and public testimonies give us an ample sample of how women castigated themselves for the sake of the cross. One woman expressed her spiritual conflicts in these words, "my aversion to holiness was so great that I rather chose annihilation. I found that instead of growing better I grew worse, that my heart was altogether vile, and that I did nothing but sin."<sup>19</sup>

---

of religious enthusiasm.

<sup>18</sup> Whitney Cross, The Burned Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800 to 1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950) 84; while there did seem to be a definite distinction in terms of sexual religious experience this should not be overstated.

<sup>19</sup> Connecticut Evangelical Magazine and Religious Intelligencer 1 (1800) 33, quoted in Epstein, 57, 58.

Some approached conversion with such intense convictions that their sinfulness actually drove them to contemplate suicide. A young lady in Torrington, Connecticut described her experience in these words:

I longed to be spoken out of existence, for the more I learned of the divine character, the more I hated it, and could not endure the thought that the Lord reigned and that all my things were at His absolute disposal. Even death appeared desirable though it should make me eternally miserable."<sup>20</sup>

Other women expressed their feelings of unworthiness in language that was equally self-depreciating. One wrote, "the black catalogue of sins of my whole life appeared to be set in most dreadful order before my eyes," another said, "my sins rose like mountains before me, I abhorred myself," still another wrote, "I saw my exceeding wickedness and criminality, and felt as if I was the most vile unworthy sinner on earth."<sup>21</sup> Such statements have a very familiar ring to those who are acquainted with the early personal testimonies of Ellen White and other women in the Millerite and Advent Movements. These emotional confessions also raise questions about what drove women into such a divergent experience from men, or what caused them to get caught up in the enthusiasm and hysteria of revivalism, in such impressive numbers. While some scholars suggest that this

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 3 (1803) 107.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., (1800) 61; (1809) 69; 6 (1806) 428.

revivalistic fervor was directly associated with changing socio-economic conditions, such an explanation does not account for the divergence that developed between male and female experience. The answer is more likely related to the limited position in which women found themselves in the early nineteenth century. In the words of Catherine Clinton,

Women had fewer options than men to demonstrate autonomy. Choice of church, marital partner, and perhaps family limitations were the only decisions left to women. Evangelical revivals afforded women an opportunity to exercise control, to state a preference, to identify. It was young women in Antebellum America, as the numbers indicate, who consciously exploited this opportunity to their own ends.<sup>22</sup>

Woman's marginal status in early nineteenth century America left her with few options. The sphere of religion offered opportunities for involvement that were available nowhere else. But even in the churches, where women exercised a prominent influence, they still experienced marginality and subordination on the levels of leadership and administration.

---

<sup>22</sup> Catherine Clinton, The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984) 43.

In summary, then, the following four points should be kept in mind as we turn our attention directly to Adventism:

1. The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of tremendous social upheaval in America. It was an era of religious and socio-political transition which strongly affected the status and experience of women.
2. In nineteenth century New England it was not uncommon for a woman to demonstrate a high degree of enthusiasm and emotionalism in her religious experience. Visions, trances, prostration , intense anxiety, spirit possession, and enthusiasm were all part of the popular religious scene.
3. The studies of Shiels, Ryan and Epstein suggest that there was a disparity between male and female religious experience in the nineteenth century. The percentage of men in the churches dropped significantly as religion came to be viewed by many as the domain of women and preachers.
4. Finally, this "feminization of American Religion" and the strong nineteenth century belief in woman's moral superiority and domestic privilege, provided the opportunity for women to develop a sphere of influence and authority that would gradually allow them to exercise a more public role in American society.

The remainder of the chapter will discuss the experience of Ellen White and other Adventist women in relationship to these four developments in nineteenth century American culture.

#### WOMEN IN EARLY ADVENTISM

Just as Sojourner Truth described the frustrating existence of the black woman, in nineteenth century America, who was subjected to dual subordination because of her color and her sex, so Adventist women also experienced a two-fold marginality due to their sexual and sectarian status. Even though there were many sectarian religious movements in the nineteenth century that gave a much more prominent role to women than the mainline protestant churches, Millerism and Adventism were not included in this number. While both Millerite Adventists and Seventh-day Adventists were significantly more involved in various social reforms than they have traditionally been given credit for,<sup>23</sup> neither group showed any interest in the women's rights movement unless it was to express occasional antagonism. Nor did women

---

<sup>23</sup> Three relatively recent studies on Millerite and Adventist social involvement are the following: Wayne Judd, "Millerism and Social Reform: A Historical Paradox" (Unpublished manuscript, Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library, 1979); Charles Teel, "Withdrawing Sect, Accomodating Church, Prophesying Remnant" (1980); and "Bridegroom or Babylon? Dragon or Lamb? Adventists and Ninteenth Century Reform Movements" (Unpublihsed manuscript, Heritage Room, Loma Linda University, (LSC) Library 1983).

figure prominently, with a few notable exceptions,<sup>24</sup> in either movement. There are no reliable statistics from the 1840's to compare the male female ratio's in Adventism, with the high female memberships in most New England protestant churches, but when statistics do become available after 1860 they show that 5 of the 528 ministers in the various Adventist denominations or churches were women (none of these were Seventh-day Adventists), and indicate that the lay membership in these churches, which was estimated at 54,000 was more equally distributed between men and women.<sup>25</sup>

Initially, the Adventists who followed William Miller did not see themselves as a sect, nor did they condemn the mainline churches. But as Miller and others were excommunicated or disfellowshipped from their former denominations, feelings of hostility and alienation grew

---

<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Clorinda Minor and Miss Emily Clemons probably contributed more to the Millerite movement than any other women, See David Turner, Come Out of Babylon (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1970) 77, 107. Ellen White was by far the most prominent woman in Seventh-day Adventism.

<sup>25</sup> The earliest and most complete report was D. T. Taylor, "Statistical Study of the Adventist movement," (January and February 1860) 75, 77, 81, 85, 90, 96. This study does not give the specific male/female ration in the Review and Herald and more accurately on the earliest membership lists attainable, it appears that women make up approximately 53.5% of the SDA church membership. Out of 459 members listed 246 were women, see Church Record (Takoma Park, Washington D.C.: General Conference Archives, August 20, 1904)

and culminated with all non-Adventist denominations being denounced, and identified with the "whore of Babylon."

The Millerite Adventists proclaimed that a man might serve the devil with both hands, and yet be regarded as a good Christian with a Presbyterian, or an Episcopalian, or a Methodist, or a Baptist book of discipline in his pocket... In as much as all these multiplied sects are opposed to the plain Bible truth of Christ's personal reign on earth, they are ANTI-CHRIST... If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, come out of Babylon, and come out NOW!<sup>26</sup>

After the "great disappointment" of 1844 Sabbatarian Adventists went a step beyond this position by advocating a "shut door" doctrine, which denied the possibility of salvation to all who had rejected the Millerite Message.<sup>27</sup> The merciless ridicule that Adventists encountered subsequent to the disappointment only served to reinforce their feelings of isolation and rejection in relation to the main body of protestants. Like the disinherited black man who generally found little time for the cause of woman's rights

---

<sup>26</sup> Charles Fitch, Come Out of Her My People, (Rochester: J.V. Himes, 1843) 12, 13, 19. For further examples of Millerite polemic and ridicule see Wayne Judd, "From Ecumenists to Come-Outers: The Millerites 1831-1845" (Unpublished manuscript. Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library, 1979)

<sup>27</sup> For a detailed study of the 'shut door and all its ramifications see, David T. Arthur, Come Out of Babylon: A Study of Millerite Separatism and Denominationalism (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1970) See also, Rolf Poehler, "And The Door Was Shut" (Research Paper: Ellen White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1978)

because of his own marginal status,<sup>28</sup> male Adventist leadership may have been too preoccupied with establishing its own credibility in the wake of the disappointment and the separatism which followed, to concern itself with a potentially decisive and threatening issue such as woman's rights. The fact that women did not constitute a significant majority of the movement's membership (as was the case in other churches), and that there were no vocal females advocating a more prominent role for women within adventism also made the question of sexual equality a non-issue.

Even Ellen White did not occupy any kind of dominant or authoritative position within Adventism, until the men who were most influential in founding the movement, that became Seventh-day Adventism, passed from the scene. While it is true that Mrs. White did gain recognition as a prophetess, and did play a confirmatory role in establishing the doctrinal beliefs of Adventists, her visionary experiences also constantly posed a source of potential embarrassment to male leadership which tended to minimize the ecstatic experiences and psycho-physical phenomena associated with her trance

---

<sup>28</sup> The most notable exception to this rule was the commendable work of Frederick Douglas in behalf of Woman's Rights, but generally black males did not support the cause of feminism. See Clinton, 197ff; Rosemary Ruether, New Woman New Earth (New York: Seabury Press, 1975) 118-120.



states. Men like James White and Uriah Smith took a defensive posture against charges that the visions were actually caused by mesmerism, hysteria and epilepsy. Other Advent leaders who eventually became strong defenders of the visions, like Joseph Bates and U. N. Loughborough, initially believed them to be the result of mesmerism.<sup>29</sup>

Like the men who dominated the Millerite movement, Seventh-day Adventist leadership placed a premium on logic, rational discourse, and emotional restraint. They took a cautious attitude towards the displays of prostration, groaning, shouting, and other forms of spiritual ecstasy which characterized some of their meetings. However, the prominence of such behavior in early adventism can certainly not be denied, particularly among women. John Greenleaf Whittier, who visited an early Adventist camp meeting at Derry, New Hampshire, in September of 1844, described the Millerites as "gentle pious women" and "sober, intelligent men," but still made the observation that Millerism acted "upon a class of uncultivated and, in some cases, gross minds."<sup>30</sup> It was during this same year that Ellen White began to receive what she believed to be visions from God.

---

<sup>29</sup> James White, A Word To The Little Flock (Brunswick, ME: 1847) 21. J.N. Loughborough, "Remarkable Fulfillments of the Visions," Review and Herald 29 (December 25, 1866), 30.

<sup>30</sup> Allen Weinstein, Freedom and Crisis in American History (New York: Random House, 1978) 278, 279.

To the majority of Millerites these "visions" were just another manifestation of the extreme religious enthusiasm or fanaticism which seemed so prevalent at the time. It has already been mentioned that accounts and claims of such revelatory experiences were not uncommon in the nineteenth century. A number of individuals reported receiving personal auditory or visionary revelations that bore great similarity to the experiences of Ellen White. An abbreviated list of such people would include Paulina Bates, Peter Cartwright, Andrew Jackson Davis, Lorenzo Dow, Hazen Foss, William Foy, Eric Johnson, Michael Kransent, Ann Lee, Joseph Smith Jr. and Sr., Jemima Wilkinson, Barbara Heinemann (Landmann), Mary Baker Eddy, etc.<sup>31</sup> That Ellen White's name could be added to such a list was more a source of embarrassment than a source of pride for most millerites. Reports of such visionary experiences became so widespread by the Eighteen Forties that Joshua V. Himes, a leading millerite spokesman complained of being in "mesmerism seven

---

<sup>31</sup> See Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (New York: Harper & Row, 1944, 1962) 68, 80, 86, 90, 115, 130, 132. Rosemary Ruether and Rosemary Keller, eds., Women and Religion in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1981) 50-87. Gavstad, 10. See also Jemison, A Prophet Among You, 485, 486. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River, 47.

feet deep."<sup>32</sup> The most disturbing cases of what the millerites referred to as "visionary nonsense," were particularly prevalent among the shut-door Adventists, who in some instances exchanged accusations of devil-possession based on the visions they had received.<sup>33</sup> Ellen White was fully aware that their visionary experiences were not totally unique, but she along with most other early Adventists believed that the genuine gift of prophecy could only be given by God to those who possessed "correct doctrine" which was equated in their minds with Sabbatarian Adventist doctrine. Two individuals that Ellen did believe to be authentic prophets both had interesting encounters with the young prophetess. William Foy was a tall, black millerite who related various "supernatural visions" to fellow believers, including Ellen Harmon (White), before the "Great Disappointment." Shortly after the "Disappointment" he was in the audience when Ellen gave a testimony about her first vision. Foy unable to contain himself leaped to his feet and praised God, declaring that he had recently seen the identical vision himself. Ellen took this to be a sign

---

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in, James White, "The Gifts of the Gospel Church," Review and Herald 1 (April 21, 1851) 69.

<sup>33</sup> Ronald Numbers, Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen White (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 16, 17.

from God that she had been called to be Foy's successor.<sup>34</sup>

A second experience involved a young man named Hazen Foss who was the brother of Ellen's close friend Louisa Foss, and the brother-in-law of Ellen's sister Mary. Hazen too, had received a similar vision, to the one Ellen and Foy had seen, just prior to the "disappointment". But he had refused to share his experience and became disillusioned after the fateful day (October 22, 1844) passed. Later he reportedly told Ellen that God had warned him that the visions would be taken from him and given to someone else if he failed to do his duty. He chose to reject Christianity, but believed that Ellen was the recipient of his special gift.<sup>35</sup> It is significant that Adventists generally believe that God first called two males to fulfill the key prophetic role in the church before turning to a woman. It was only when men refused the gift that God entrusted it to a female. Once the early Adventists became convinced that Ellen was a legitimate prophetess, her prominence in the movement became

---

<sup>34</sup> William E. Foy, The Christian Experience of William E. Foy, Together With Two Visions He Received in the Months of January and February, 1842 (Portland: J. and C.H. Pearson, 1845) See also, "William Foy: A Statement by E.G. White," from an interview with D.E. Robinson, circa 1912 (DF 231, White Estate).

<sup>35</sup> Ellen White to Marry Harmon Foss, December 22, 1890 (F-37-1890, White Estate). See also Ellen White, Life Sketches (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915) 77.

directly identified with the "supernatural gifts" that she had been given. Her human capabilities were downplayed or even minimized. She was uneducated, she had a history of physical illness, she referred to herself as only a "weak vessel", and her womanhood fit naturally into the list of evidences that were used to persuade others that her accomplishments were of divine origin, and not the work of a disadvantaged young woman. To those who believed in her gift, Ellen White transcended the sphere of womanhood. She was not a typical human being, but a prophetess whose accomplishments had no relevance for women in general, and set no precedents for those who might wish to broaden woman's sphere.

Like so many nineteenth century women, Ellen White had a strong inclination towards religious enthusiasm. Her trance episodes often began with the words Glory, Glory, Glory, and while in vision she reportedly possessed supernatural strength. "On occasion she was subjected to indignities. For example, her husband James White, let one young man - later a leading Adventist minister - see if she could survive for ten minutes while he simultaneously pinched her nose and covered her mouth."<sup>36</sup> Many Adventists found such demonstrations to be extremely impressive, while others like Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and

---

<sup>36</sup> Numbers, 19.

his brother Merritt attributed her behavior to catalepsy, a nervous condition related to "hysteria."<sup>37</sup>

Apart from visionary experiences the early Adventists were involved in a number of charismatic practices that provided a spiritual outlet, particularly for women, and demonstrated a similar inclination towards the intense emotionism that was pervasive in protestanism and nineteenth century revivalism. These practices included ecstatic utterance and interpreting tongues, miraculous healing, shouting, barking, weeping, physical prostration, groaning, swooning, fainting, exchanging "holy kisses," "promiscuous" footwashing, etc.<sup>38</sup> Descriptions of early adventist meetings give evidence of such emotional fervor, "the Spirit came and we had a powerful season. Brother and Sister Ralph were both laid prostrate and remained helpless for some time." Another account reads,

The power of God came upon us like a mighty rushing wind. All arose upon their feet and praised God with a loud voice; it was something as it was when the foundation of the house of God was

---

<sup>37</sup> H.E. Carver, Mrs. E.G. White's Claims To Divine Inspiration Examined (Marion, IA: Advent and Sabbath Advocate Press, 1877) 75-76.

<sup>38</sup> See Arthur White, Ecstatic Experiences in Early SDA History (Washington: Ellen G. White Estate, 1972) 1-8; Ron Graybill, "Footwashing and Fanatics," Insight (January 2, 1973) 9-13; some of the early Adventists had been connected with the shouting Methodists, see Winthrop Hudson, "Shouting Methodists," Encounter 29 (Winter, 1968) 73-84.

laid. The voice of weeping could not be told from the voice of shouting. It was a triumphant time; all were strengthened and refreshed. I never witnessed such a powerful time before.<sup>39</sup>

While the freedom that accompanied such a charismatic approach to religion provided women with greater opportunities for participation and involvement, two factors in the early Adventist movement were primarily responsible for bringing this "charismatic period" in the churches history to a rather abrupt halt. First of all, there were those who allowed the excitement and enthusiasm of such meetings to lead them into the extremes of fanaticism. One such group of early adventists in Maine earned the nickname, "Down East Fanatics", because of their rather bizarre beliefs and practices.<sup>40</sup> Even Ellen White was guilty of certain charismatic extremes that raised concern and caution in circles of leadership. Most notable among these was her absolute belief in divine healing. In 1849 Mrs. White stated,

If any among us are sick, let us not dishonor God by applying to earthly physicians, but apply to the God of Israel. If we follow His directions (James 4:14,15) the sick will be healed. God's promise cannot fail. Have faith in God, and trust

---

<sup>39</sup> White Estate Correspondence letter 1, 1848 (Centerport, New York), and letter H-28-1850 (November 7, 1950, Paris, Maine), quoted by Arthur White, 4, 5.

<sup>40</sup> The Day Star (October 3, 1845) 39.

wholly in Him, that when Christ who is our life shall appear, we may appear with Him in glory.<sup>41</sup>

Such an extreme position could easily produce unfortunate consequences for any who took it literally. Such allegedly was the case with sister Prior, a believer in Cander, New York, who refused to see a physician and died as a result. After this tragedy Mrs. White spoke against such "fanaticism" and adopted a more moderate position. However, the effects of such situations not only reduced charismatic excesses, but also served to dampen or restrain the movements emphasis on religious enthusiasm.

A second, more significant, factor which contributed to the decline of charismatic practices in Adventism was the movement towards church structure or "Gospel Order". While there were many who rejected "organization" as a "sign of Babylon," those who wished to institutionalize the movement prevailed in 1863, and this did a great deal to stifle the charismatic freedom that had previously existed. With the creation of institutional order came a corresponding "domestication" of charisma, which is the normative pattern in the sect/denomination developmental process.<sup>42</sup> According to Ron Graybill, Ellen White used her charismatic authority

---

<sup>41</sup> Ellen White, "To Those Who Are Receiving The Seal of the Living God" (Broadside dated January 31, 1849, Topsham, Maine) Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC).

<sup>42</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building, (Chicago University Press, 1968) 266.



to create an institutional structure, and once the Adventist church was organized her ecstatic and visionary experiences rapidly declined. Her charismatic experiences played a key role in establishing the church, but gradually diminished and disappeared in the 1860's and 70's together with other "ecstatic manifestations of religious excitement in Adventist circles."<sup>43</sup>

In one sense it is unfortunate that the contributions of Ellen White, and indeed her whole identity within Adventism, have been so inseparably linked with divine revelations that her natural leadership gifts and abilities have been minimized or overlooked. While it is true she was tragically knocked unconscious for 3 weeks by a thrown rock at the age of nine, and disfigured so badly that her own father could not recognize her after returning home from a trip;<sup>44</sup> this injury did not permanently incapacitate her. While it is true that she received no more than a third grade education in terms of formal training, not nearly enough is said about her thirst for knowledge, her high

---

<sup>43</sup> Ron Graybill, The Power of Prophecy (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1983) 97, 137.

<sup>44</sup> Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts II, 10. This injury was only one of many severe health problems suffered by Ellen White, see Rennie Schoepflin and Ronald Numbers, "Ministries of Healing: Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen G. White, and the Religion of Health," in Judith Walzer Leavitt (ed) Women and Health in America: Historical Readings, ed (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984) 383.

mental aptitude, and her tremendous accomplishments in self-education. And while it is true that Ellen suffered from intense feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem, which at times were even suicidal and neurotic,<sup>45</sup> not enough is said about her tremendous faith, willpower and drive, which enabled her to overcome some monumental handicaps to become a woman who was used by God to accomplish tremendous things. Because of the "all or nothing" concept of a true prophet (or prophetess) which pervaded Adventist thinking, and elevated Ellen White on an unrealistic pedestal, where she eventually became an "infallible authority", she was never allowed to be just a human being. More importantly, for this study, she was never allowed to be a role model for women. Therefore the tremendous things she accomplished as a woman, did not serve to broaden the sphere of womanhood within Adventism, but actually helped to limit it.

#### ELLEN WHITE AND DOMESTICITY

In nineteenth century America women were considered to be pure, virtuous and morally superior to men, or else, if they did not measure up to society's expectations, were believed to be the most evil and degraded creatures. Woman

---

<sup>45</sup> Ellen White, Testimonies, I, 25; Spiritual Gifts, II, 9.

could either rise to a higher point of perfection or sink to a lower depth of immorality than man. In the words of Ruth Rosen, "women were either Madonnas or Magdalens, Marys or Eves, angels or whores. As one male speaker in 1837 asserted, "in the female character, there is no midregion; it must exist in spotless innocence or else in hopeless vice."<sup>46</sup> In this context Ellen White was certainly perceived, by Adventists, to be a Madonna. After the death of her husband in 1881, she became the great matriarch of the church, whose word for many became gospel on almost every conceivable subject. Though Adventists were generally hesitant to acknowledge the extent of her authority, due to the fact that they claimed the Bible as their only authority, it is fair to say that for practical purposes Ellen White gradually became the equivalent of a "Dear Abby" with papal authority in the Adventist community. Her counsel was sought on all topics, but none were more important to her than the questions of woman's domestic privileges and duties.

In 1872 Ellen White wrote to a young woman with professional ambitions, who felt confined and dissatisfied with being limited to a domestic role in life. Her counsel to this young lady reflects the basic philosophy which she

---

<sup>46</sup> Ruth Rosen, The Lost Sisterhood (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1982) 6.

subscribed to throughout her lifetime.

Dear sister O: I think you are not happy. In seeking for some great work to do, you overlook present duties lying directly in your path. You are not happy, because you are looking above the little everyday duties of life for some higher greater work to do. You are restless, uneasy, and dissatisfied. You love to dictate better than you love to perform. You love better to tell others what to do than with ready cheerfulness to take hold and do yourself... Plain, simple duties, if done with willingness and faithfulness, will give you an education which it is necessary for you to obtain in order to have a love for household duties. Here is an experience that is highly essential for you to gain, but you do not love it. You murmur at your lot, thus making those around you unhappy and meeting with a great loss yourself. You may never be called to do a work which will bring you before the public. But all the work we do that is necessary to be done, be it washing dishes, setting tables, waiting upon the sick, cooking, or washing, is of moral importance... All are working in their order in their respective spheres. Woman in her home, doing the simple duties of life that must be done, can and should exhibit faithfulness, obedience, and love as sincere as angels in their sphere. Conformity to the will of God makes any work honorable that must be done... The highest duty that devolves upon youth is in their own homes. . . never will woman be degraded by this work. It is the most sacred, elevated office that she can fill.<sup>47</sup>

While this "prophetic advice" was no doubt a difficult pill to swallow for a gifted young woman whose talents may have primarily existed outside the domestic realm, the prophet's position was echoed and re-echoed throughout her lifetime by virtually everyone who addressed the subject of woman's role, in Adventist periodicals/publications.

---

<sup>47</sup> Ellen White, "Faithfulness in Home Duties," (Testimonies 21, 1872), in her Testimonies, 79-80.

Beginning in the 1870's and continuing into the 1920's a steady stream of articles appeared in the Adventist's main church paper, The Review and Herald, on the topic of woman's sphere. These articles reflected the strong domestic emphasis for women, that had become popular in all conservative Christian literature of the day, dealing with the subject. For example, an article entitled "woman's sphere" in the Millennial Harbinger, stated that woman's domestic action was "God's cradle in which the world is rocked." The article concluded with a challenge to all mothers to "Go forth, then, in the discharge of every duty, remembering, that your country demands it, that society demands it, and that poor, suffering humanity will take no excuse for neglect."<sup>48</sup>

In nineteenth century America women were declared, by men, to be the preservers of Christianity and the saviours of society, a responsibility that produced a substantial bit of guilt for mothers who experienced failure. Woman was created for this special task, according to Adventists and other advocates of domesticity, because she had a different nature than man. Her thought process were different, her emotional make-up was different. Man was inclined to leadership and reason, while woman was meant to nurture and

---

<sup>48</sup> William Moore, "Woman's Sphere and Responsibilities," Millennial Harbinger 3:10 October, 1860) 591.

rely on intuition. An early (1866) article in the Review which took this very position concluded that after man toils up the staircase of reason "he will be sure to find a woman at the top; but she will not be able to tell how she got there."<sup>49</sup>

The most glowing praises of woman's domestic sphere began to appear in Adventist literature of the next decade. Mothers are declared to be responsible for the Washingtons and Wesleys who changed the world.<sup>50</sup> They are assured that home duties make up the highest mission a woman can attain to. "She who scrubs the kitchen floor" and "daintily cleans the windows... fulfills a mission as high, perhaps higher," than those who contribute to society in other ways.<sup>51</sup>

Woman is assured that her greatest happiness and fulfillment is to be found in her "natural desire" for subordination. "On the whole, married women, that is, real women, prefer to be ruled rather than ruling."<sup>52</sup> But the most noble acclamations of domesticity, and the strongest warning for women who neglect it, come from the prophetess herself, in an

---

<sup>49</sup> "The Judgements of Women," Review and Herald 27:24 (May 15, 1866), 187.

<sup>50</sup> "The Sphere of Woman's Influence," Health Reformer 8, (1873) 254.

<sup>51</sup> "Aspirations," Health Reformer 8 (1873) 126.

<sup>52</sup> "Love, Honor and Obey," Review and Herald (November 18, 1875), 159.

article where she quoted Daniel Wise.

What is the sphere of woman? What is her mission? What are her chief instruments for the accomplishment of her great work?... Woman must abide in the peaceful sanctuaries of home, and walk in the noiseless vales of private life. There she must dwell, beside the secret springs of public virtue. There she must smile upon the father, the brother, the husband, when, returning like warriors from the fight, exhausted and covered with the dust of strife, they need to be refreshed by sweet waters drawn from "affections spring," and cheered to renewed struggles by the music of her voice.

How is woman to accomplish this selfless task? Ellen answers again with the words of Wise "Love is the word by which she is to work moral transformations within her fairy circle," and make the home a "heaven on earth."

There she must rear the Christian patriot and statesman, the self-denying philanthropist and the obedient citizen. There, in a word, she must form the character of the world, and determine the destiny of her race. How awful is her mission! What dread responsibility attaches to her work! Surely, she is not degraded by filling such a sphere. Nor would she be elevated if, forsaking it, she should go forth into the highways of society and jostle with her brothers for the offices and honors of public life. . . away, then, from your heart, young lady,<sup>53</sup> with all the vagaries of these pseudo reformers!

In the decades that followed the 1870's a host of articles appeared which reinforced Adventist women in their commitment to domesticity. Some denounced the "terrible

---

<sup>53</sup> Ellen White, "Proper Education," Health Reformer 8 (1873) 221, 222; she borrows these quotes from Daniel Wise, The Young Ladies Counselor, but gives no specific reference.

wrongs" of the suffragists,<sup>54</sup> others simply glorified the "sweet-minded" nature of womanhood,<sup>55</sup> while still others warned against the devastating consequences which would result if the responsibilities of homemaking were not carefully observed.<sup>56</sup> But no one could supercede the eloquence<sup>57</sup> that Ellen White had demonstrated in stating her case, and although Ellen would speak out more against male abuse of power in her later years, adventists remained committed to the belief that man and woman were ordained by God to fill separate roles until her death. Like many outside of their denomination, they feared that those

---

<sup>54</sup> "Mrs. Garfield on Woman's Duties," Review and Herald (June 20, 1882) 391; see also "True Womanhood," Review and Herald (May 28, 1895) 341; "Wanted More Mothers," Signs of the Times 52 (1925) 10.

<sup>55</sup> "Sweet-Minded Women," Review and Herald (December 6, 1881) 359; see also, "The Dignity of Greasing the Wheels," Review and Herald (October 10, 1882) 629; Ellen White, "Woman in the Home," Signs of the Times (September 9, 1886) 1; "The Christian Wife and Mother," Review and Herald (April 10, 1894) 229; Mrs. K.A. Wilcox, "The Responsibility of Motherhood," Signs of the Times, 21 (January 3, 1895); Anna White, "True Womanliness," Review and Herald, (October 24, 1899), 682.

<sup>56</sup> W.S. Sadler, "A Warning to Mothers," Review and Herald (August 22, 1899); Mrs. W.T.B., "Some Thoughts For Slow Women," Review and Herald (July 23, 1895) 410; Keld Reynolds, "Broken Homes and Broken Lives," Signs of the Times 52 (1925) 12, 13.

<sup>57</sup> It is very possible in the light of recent Ellen White research, that some of the eloquent words which appear in quotes attributed to Ellen White were actually borrowed from other authors without giving them credit.



movements which advocated the removal of sexual spheres were only encouraging a distortion of nature that would produce weak and effeminate men,<sup>58</sup> and obnoxiously masculine women. However, there were many denominations that were beginning to encourage women to broaden their sphere in society and better prepare themselves for employment in public life.<sup>59</sup>

The most fascinating question related to Adventism's strong belief in domesticity, is the notable tension between what was being said in adventist literature, particularly in the writings of Ellen White, and what was being practiced by the prophetess in her own family life and ministry. After examining Ellen's behavior in terms of courtship, period of engagement, age at marriage, time away from home, relationship to her husband, and personal involvement in the raising and training of her children, it is difficult to establish any strong harmonious relationship between what the prophetess taught and how she acted. This is not to imply that Ellen White was guilty of indiscretions or immoral practices, nor it is an indication that she was an irresponsible wife or mother. The evidence indicates on

---

<sup>58</sup> J.W. Buckham, "Effeminate Preaching," Christian World Pulpit (November 12, 1902).

<sup>59</sup> One example of this is, Helen Churchill Candee, How Women May Earn A Living, reviewed in Methodist Review (November 1900) 1004, 1005.

the contrary, that she was a good wife and a committed mother, providing we do not judge her by her own statements regarding true womanhood. But if we do evaluate her on the basis of her own writings, her home life was anything but ideal.

Even before marriage James and Ellen had an unusual relationship. For a young unmarried woman to travel about the countryside in 1845 with a young man who was not even her fiance was scandalous behavior that always provoked ugly rumors, whether they had any basis in fact or not. The fact that they had known each other for less than a year<sup>60</sup> when they were married was also certainly not ideal. But the most obvious tensions - between Ellen's life and teachings came in her roles as wife and mother.

Though James and Ellen tried to provide as much religious training in their home as possible, they were forced to be away from home a great deal, and experienced significant problems with their sons. It was after their first anniversary that the Whites became parents. Their financial status and demanding travels forced them to leave their newborn son, Henry, with friends for the first six years of his life. This was a difficult sacrifice for both of them which provided painful memories when Henry died at the

---

<sup>60</sup> Document File 733C, Ellen G. White Estate.

tender age of sixteen. Possibly to ease her guilt and partially justify their early absence from Henry, Ellen wrote a tract entitled "Early Trials and Labors," in which she said, "his little sad face, as I left him, was before me night and day; yet, in the strength of the Lord I put him out of my mind, and sought to do others good."<sup>61</sup>

Only three years earlier Ellen had suffered through the anguish of losing her fourth son, John, who died in infancy, but even that experience did not cause her as much grief as the loss of Henry, her "sweet little singer." However, the greatest source of grief, frustration and marital tension for James and Ellen came from their second son, Edson. Much of the friction which existed between Edson and his parents was probably the result of sibling rivalry. Edson had never seemed to possess the spiritual interest of his "eulogized" brother Henry, and he strongly resented the fact that he was expected to watch and take responsibility for Willie, his younger brother, who seemed to be the family favorite.<sup>62</sup> Both James and Ellen found Edson to be a trial and disap-

---

<sup>61</sup> "Early Trials and Labors," MS - 5, 1863, Ellen G. White Estate.

<sup>62</sup> See Kennon, 369; and Virgil Robinson, James White (Washington: Review and Herald, 1976) 259-266.

pointment, and rebuked him with great regularity.

From the time Willie was born, Edson received constant reproof and condemnation, while his little brother got constant praise and encouragement. Willie was a 'good natured' baby who seldom cried; Edson had 'more life and roughery'. When Edson was 11, his father urged him to 'love and indulge Willie' for he was the 'best boy' Edson would ever see. When he was 12, his mother told him she had awakened weeping because she had dreamed he was dying and had no evidence that he 'loved God' and was 'prepared to die'. 'You may ask' she wrote, 'why does mother think I am not a child of God? One evidence is, you do not love to attend meetings on the Sabbath. . . . In another letter she told Edson to watch against his 'besetments,' and a few lines later:<sup>63</sup> 'My dear little Willie, May the Lord bless you!

In spite of her various counsels to Adventist parents stressing the importance of unconditional love and reinforcing the positive, Ellen continuously reminded Edson that his life was "a mistake," "a failure" and "worse than useless."<sup>64</sup> She found him at sixteen to be untruthful and disobedient. She was also highly disturbed and dismayed by his dating young ladies at the tender age of sixteen, his choice of amusements, and rebellious spirit which allowed him to wear a gold watch and heavy chain, to the greatest embarrassment of his mother.<sup>65</sup> Edson's behavior was such a

---

<sup>63</sup> Graybill, 63, 64.

<sup>64</sup> Ellen G. White To Dear Son Edson, Letter 6 (June 10, 1869); Letter 2a (Jan. 14, 1872); Letter 14 (June 17, 1869); Ellen G. White Estate.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Letter 4 (Sept. 22, 1866).

source of anxiety for his mother, that she feared he would do her more harm than all her enemies. She finally expressed her feelings in rather harsh words when she informed Edson that his lack of spirituality made her regret that he was her son, "I would rather be written childless than have my children live and not devote their lives to God, but exert an influence in the wrong direction."<sup>66</sup>

Later Edson broke his mother's heart when he informed her that he had "no religious inclinations in the least."<sup>67</sup> However, less than two years after this statement Edson had reconsidered his position and organized a missionary journey down the Mississippi to evangelize blacks in the south. The rocky relations between Edson and his mother again demonstrated the difficulties Ellen had in implementing her own counsels concerning domesticity.

Finally, it would be hard to characterize Ellen as a submissive wife, and impossible to say that she accepted a subordinate position in relation to her husband in all situations. The supportive role she recommended for other wives was not always the path she chose in her own marriage. In 1874, the year that James stepped down from the General Conference Presidency, Ellen informed him that she would

---

<sup>66</sup> Ellen G. White to Edson White, June 17, 1868 (W-15, 1868) EGW Estate.

<sup>67</sup> Edson White to Ellen White, May 18, 1893.

function independently from his wishes and judgements where she saw fit.

When we can work the best together we will do so. If God says it is for His glory we work apart occasionally, we will do that. But God is willing to show me my work and my duty and I shall look to Him in faith and trust Him fully to lead me.<sup>68</sup>

Shortly after this letter, Ellen again wrote James informing him that he was not being led of the Lord and that she hoped they would not end up trying to "pull each other down" if they had to "walk apart the rest of the way." But for the time being she did believe it was best for their "labors to be disconnected" so that they might "each lean upon God" for themselves.<sup>69</sup> During the 1870's James and Ellen lived separately for months at a time due to their schedules, and tensions in the relationship.<sup>70</sup> Both James and Ellen could be quite "sharp in temperament," but this was especially true in James. Fellow adventists had characterized him as a man given to "cutting and slashing."<sup>71</sup> And James at times lived up to such a reputation. In his younger days he had referred to one congregation he addressed as "hard, old,

---

<sup>68</sup> Ellen G. White to James White, Letter 38 (July 2, 1874).

<sup>69</sup> Ellen White to James White, Letter 40 (July 8, 1874).

<sup>70</sup> Graybill, 39ff.

<sup>71</sup> Ellen White to sisters Harriet, Cornelia, and Martha, Letter 13 (September 24, 1869).

ugly Congregationalists and Methodists", but he felt that it was his duty to preach "even to swine."<sup>72</sup> Throughout his lifetime James was known as a man of straight words. He was certainly not an easy man to live with. Therefore, Ellen's conflicts with him were certainly understandable. But the fact remains, that there was a significant gap between the "domestic sphere," which Ellen idealized during her ministry, and the much broader "sphere of womanhood." that she modeled in her own life. It seems likely that her support of domesticity was more related to the sustenance of her prophetic role in a conservative religious movement, and the historical setting in which she found herself in nineteenth century America, than it did with her personal experience.

---

<sup>72</sup> James White to brother Collins, August 26, 1846, in Ellen G. White Estate.

## CHAPTER TWO

## ADVENTIST WOMEN AND THE EVILS OF URBANISM

The most sinister and menacing figure of our modern life is the cigarette-smoking, cocktail-drinking, pug-dog-nursing, half-dressed, painted woman, who frequents the theaters, giggles at the cabarets, gambles in our drawing rooms or sits around our hotels, with her dress cut 'C' in front and 'V' behind! She is a living invitation to lust, and a walking advertisement of the fact that many of our modern women have lowered their standards of life!

Lucas Albert Reed, Signs of the Times,  
1920.

Before the American Revolution approximately ninety percent of Americans lived on farms.<sup>1</sup> However, with the dawning of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century there came a pronounced shift from ruralism, with its emphasis on domestic labor, to urbanism and industrial employment. The socio-cultural changes which accompanied this shift had a profound impact on women<sup>2</sup> leading on

---

<sup>1</sup> Carl Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America From the Revolution to the Present (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) 362, 364.

<sup>2</sup> Julie Matthaei, An Economic History of Women in America (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1982) 142, 283. See also Mary and Elliot Brownlee, Women in the American Economy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926) 144-240. Nancy Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).



the one hand to the "cult of true womanhood"<sup>3</sup> and on the other to the emergence of feminism as a socio-political force.<sup>4</sup>

When one considers Seventh-day Adventism in the social context of nineteenth century America there are two striking socio-economic factors which tend to separate Adventists from the cultural mainstream. First, although Adventists were ideologically a Millenarian movement, they did not generally fit into the lower socio-economic class which typically is identified with Millenarianism. According to census reports in 1860, the majority of Adventist households tended to be concentrated in the upper half of the economic scale.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, Adventism throughout most of the nineteenth century remained a rural movement located primarily in the northern part of the mid-west. Like the Millerite movement from which it was conceived Adventism

---

<sup>3</sup> Ann Douglass, The Feminization of American Culture, (New York: Knopf, 1978); Amanda Porterfield, Feminine Spirituality in America (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980) 51-81. Barbara Welter "The Cult of True Womanhood," Women and Womanhood in America (Boston: Heath, 1973) 103-113.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, The Woman and the City, 1800-1860, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 30-59, 143 F.

<sup>5</sup> Ron Graybill, "Millenarians and Money: Adventist Wealth and Adventist Beliefs," Spectrum 10:2 (August, 1979) 31-41.

found the bedrock of its support in small farming communities.<sup>6</sup> The denomination's rural membership, on a percentage bases, far exceeded what was generally found in the other protestant churches of the day. A sampling of Adventist households in the 1860's reveals that only one percent were located in cities, three percent in places large enough to be called villages, and ninety-six percent were scattered over the rural countryside. This same study reflected the overwhelming rural character of Adventism in terms of employment. Farmers made up seventy-eight percent of the heads of Adventist households while ninety-five percent of Adventist workers were self-employed. Only five percent fell into the category of employed laborers.<sup>7</sup> Due to Adventist opposition to organized labor<sup>8</sup> very few Adventist women worked outside the home and virtually none got involved in the textile and manufacturing industries which drew heavily on female labor in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Robin Theobald, "The Seventh-day Adventist Movement: A Sociological Study" (Ph.D. Dissertation: photocopied in Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library 1979), pp. 195F. See also Arthur Spalding, Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists (1962) II 262.

<sup>7</sup> Graybill, 34, 35.

<sup>8</sup> Eugene Chellis, "The Review and Herald and Early Adventist Response To Organized Labor," Spectrum 10:2 (August, 1979) 20-30.

<sup>9</sup> Degler, 376.

Socio-economic reasons served to reinforce the firm Adventist belief, which was shared by many other churches as well, that "cities were centers of materialism, riotous amusement, criminality, labor unrest, alien culture and alien religion; the very antithesis of the Protestant virtues of sober individualism."<sup>10</sup> In nineteenth century Adventism a woman's place was in a rural home, motherhood was idealized, and feminism was perceived by Ellen White, and the church in general, to be one more example of the corrupt and immoral influences which had resulted from urbanism.

#### WOMEN, LABOR AND URBAN VIOLENCE

When Josef Hall warned his readers that American civilization was approaching the verge of "complete dissolution" in 1920, he was expressing a belief that had consistently recurred in Adventist periodicals for nearly half a century. However, after the first world war declining female morality was increasingly identified as the "sure sign" that the United States was following the "licentious" path of "Rome and Sodom." Hall acknowledged that society had survived the blemished record of male

---

<sup>10</sup> Theobald, 196.

morality in all ages, but that America would pay an ultimate price for "the slackening moral bounds of women."<sup>11</sup> The urbanization of the American woman was a phenomenon that occurred decades before Seventh-day Adventists would become sensitized to its significance. But the complimentary, and sometimes antagonistic, relationships that came to exist between female wage earners, woman's clubs and reform groups, labor movements, feminists, and the protestant churches in nineteenth century urban America, would have a profound impact on Adventism and its commitment to rural living.

Between 1800 and 1930 the number of women in the American labor force (outside the home) steadily increased.<sup>12</sup> Not only did the American economy become increasingly dependent on female labor in the early nineteenth century, it also benefitted tremendously from the way women were exploited in the factories, and other labor markets they were allowed to enter. Poor working conditions, extremely long hours, and much lower wages than men, were all burdens that women were forced to bear, and all contributed to the growing support for labor organizations among wage earning

---

<sup>11</sup> Josef Hall, "Has Our Civilization Passed Its Zenith," Signs of the Times, (1920) 8, 9.

<sup>12</sup> A statistical table which clearly demonstrates this increase can be found in Brownlee, 3.

women.<sup>13</sup> During the 1830's there were limited and occasional strikes by female workers, but no formal labor organizations in New England, such as the men had. During the 1840's this changed.

In 1845 the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association was established, and immediately petitioned the Massachusetts Legislature to investigate woman's working conditions, and to pass legislation limiting the maximum work day to ten hours. Although several states passed such laws, they all contained serious loopholes that allowed for the continued abuse of female labor. Not until 1887 did the majority of New England's states enact laws which adequately enforced a maximum 10 hour work day.<sup>14</sup> However, in spite of this legislation, working conditions for women continued to be a major problem through the 1920's and beyond, due to rigid segregation relating to many job opportunities, and the ongoing injustice of extremely low wages.<sup>15</sup> The improvements that did come, came primarily from the pressures of organized labor. By the 1860's, in most if not all of the urban centers of America, there were female

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 159-179.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 159,170.

<sup>15</sup> Leslie Woodcock Tentler, Wage Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-1930 (London: Oxford University Press, 1979, 1982) 13-50.

unions, or feminist and protofeminist organizations pressuring the largest unions to combat the exploitation of women.<sup>16</sup>

One of the largest and most influential female organizations in the nineteenth century was the women's Christian Temperance Union. For many years Seventh-day Adventists were extremely supportive of and involved with, the W.C.T.U.,<sup>17</sup> in spite of the fact that its longstanding president, Francis Willard, actively endorsed the goals and actions of organized labor. As early as 1874 the W.C.T.U. declaration of principles, drafted by Willard, supported labors' demands for better wages and an eight-hour work day.<sup>18</sup> During the turbulent labor disputes of the mid eighties, Willard wrote an official letter in behalf of the WCTU to "all trade unions, and other labor organizations," saying, "we come to you naturally as to our friends and

---

<sup>16</sup> Catherine Clinton, 172, 173.

<sup>17</sup> Between 1875 and 1915 a large number of articles appear in Review and Herald which demonstrate the strong support Adventists gave to the WCTU, as well as showing the complex relationship that existed between these organizations. The section entitled "The WCTU and Adventist Women" in chapter four of this dissertation provides specific documentation on this point.

<sup>18</sup> Henry May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper and Row, 1949) 127.

allies."<sup>19</sup> In 1887 Willard was herself initiated into the order of the knights of labor, becoming its strongest advocate of equal pay for women.<sup>20</sup> To those women who would question her belief that ladies should be actively involved in labor disputes, and other public matters outside the domestic sphere, her answer was simple, "running New York is just a big housekeeping job, just like your own home, only a larger scale. Therefore you should be interested in city wide affairs."<sup>21</sup>

In addition to Willard and the WCTU, the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) which claimed a combined membership of 1 million by 1911, also began to devote itself to urban causes and reforms relating to women in the 1890's. Not only did the organization establish kindergartens, libraries, parks and other projects that led to civic improvement, but it played a primary role in the "municipal housecleaning" movement which actively combatted urban corruption, fiscal irresponsibility and civic mismanagement.

---

<sup>19</sup> Frances Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years (Boston, G.M. Smith and Co. 1889) 422, 423.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Earhart Dillon, Frances Willard, From Prayers to Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1944) 247-250.

<sup>21</sup> Sheila Rothman, Woman's Proper Place (New York: Basic, 1978) 117.

Even more conservative than the WCTU, the GFWC did not embrace feminism or even support women's suffrage until 1914.<sup>22</sup> However, these women's organizations did help build bridges between organized labor and the churches.

Although many states had seen the majority of their populations shift from rural to urban locations by the year 1850,<sup>23</sup> it was not until the late 1870's and early 1880's that the protestant churches began to take an active interest in labor disputes, the plight of the working man and woman, and various other social problems connected with urbanization.<sup>24</sup> But more than any other factor, it was the sudden shock of strikes and labor conflicts that shattered protestant complacency and focused the attention of many

---

<sup>22</sup> Carol Hymowitz and Michaela Weissman, A History of Women in America (New York: Bantam 1978) 221, 222.

<sup>23</sup> Cott, 13.

<sup>24</sup> Aaron Abell, The Urban Impact On American Protestantism 1865-1900 (London: Archon, 1962), 86-92; See also, May, 163-203; Boyer has provided an excellent study of how the protestant churches adapted to societal change in the nineteenth century through involvement with various reform movements, he makes a distinction between the coercive approach which tried to force reform on urban centers, and the environmentalist approach which worked to establish parks, recreation centers, etc. to help relieve urban problems, Urban Masses and Moral Order in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 162-187; Cross examines 4 primary ways that the churches responded to urbanism in the nineteenth century: transformations, transplantations, adaptations, reintegrations. See Robert Cross The Church and the City (New York: Bobs-Merrill, 1967) XI-XIII.



churches on the growing urban centers of America.<sup>25</sup> In 1884 the American Congress of Churches was formed, which aimed to unite all Evangelical denominations under the banner of the Kingdom of God or the promotion of social justice in the cities. The congress met two years later in Cleveland to directly confront issues relating to the churches and organized labor. Everett Wheeler and Henry George spoke on topics such as, "methods for acquiring influence with the working classes," and "the working man's distrust of the church, its causes and remedies." The next year William Dodge, newly elected president of the congress, appealed to all the churches to focus on social responsibilities and to deal less with human creeds and more with human needs.<sup>26</sup> While the majority of protestant denominations moved in this direction, including a significant number of conservative churches,<sup>27</sup> Adventists generally remained isolated from the socially disadvantaged urban masses, and strongly opposed the cause of organized labor even in the most glaring cases of exploitation and injustice. Though aware of the fact that 6 and 7 year old girls were being forced to work 13 hours a day for next

---

<sup>25</sup> May, 112, 113.

<sup>26</sup> Abell, 89-92.

<sup>27</sup> See Norris Magnuson, Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920 (Metuchen NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977).

to nothing, by some industrialists, Adventists consistently denounced all trade unions as tools of the devil for three reasons. First, Adventists believed that "time was too short" to be contesting rights or "wrangling over wages... and thus allowing probation to pass" in the setting of worldly distractions. Secondly, many Adventists subscribed to the theory that wages should be determined solely by "the law and supply demand." Finally, Uriah Smith, editor of the Review and Herald, believed along with other Adventists that "great masses of American workingmen" were united with socialistic revolutionaries who were part of a "standing conspiracy against progress, liberty and Christian civilization."<sup>28</sup> The violence and riots connected with strikes drew strong condemnation from Ellen White, and reinforced her view that labor unions were the agency of Satan which would bring about the final time of trouble. Labor conflicts such as the "Molly Maguire Riots" of 1875-76, the Pullman strike of 1894, and the great Coal Strike of 1902, convinced Adventists that the cities had become the chaotic centers of bloodshed and lawlessness. They were certainly no place for a woman; particularly young

---

<sup>28</sup> Uriah Smith, "The International Communism," Review and Herald, 39 (March 26, 1872) 116; "The Commune," R&H 50 (October 11, 1877) 113; "The Coming Storm," R&H 62 (April 14, 1885) 240; M.E. Kellogg, "Labor Unions," R&H 71 (July 24, 1894) 470-471; G.C. Tenney, "The Outlook," R&H 71 (August 7, 1894) 502; "Lawlessness vs. Christianity," R&H 71 (June 19, 1894) 392.

women who were to be taught domestic duties in the peaceful environment of the home. The dangers of urban living combined with the idleness and vice connected with city life, prompted Ellen White to warn Adventist parents repeatedly, to keep their children out of the city. Mothers, do not subject your daughters to "the sin and ruin of Sodom." "There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually by residing in the city." Those parents who chose to ignore the advice of Ellen White, and moved to the city out of economic necessity, were likened to the Canaanites who "offered their children to Moloch."<sup>29</sup> Adventists had a very definite mission and message for the large cities, but they were not to reside in urban centers.

The "urban crisis" that concerned Adventists so much was acknowledged by other Protestant Christians as well, but their solutions to the problem tended to be somewhat different. Men such as Charles Loring Brace, the congregationalist reformer who devoted his life to urban problems, and Josiah Strong, a congregationalist minister who also advocated social Christianity, believed that the cities provided the environment where the religion of Christ could truly be lived out. Brace though not a radical,

---

<sup>29</sup> Ellen White, Testimonies to the Church, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948) II 371; The Adventist Home, (Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1952) 136, 137.

appealed to the socialistic Christianity of the New Testament to support his claim that the churches had neglected their humanitarian tradition, and had actually contributed to the inequities of urban life.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to Adventist views on organized labor, he stated, "I believe myself that, in general, the laboring classes do not receive their fair share. Strikes are one of their means of getting more."<sup>31</sup>

Josiah Strong, who also supported organized labor, wrote the most influential and best selling book of the decade in 1885, when he published, Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis. In an apocalyptic scenario, Strong attacked all the nineteenth century villains that threatened to destroy "Protestant America." Urban industrialists, the Pope, immigrants, the Catholic working man, were all contributing to a new climate which was responsible for increasing urban violence and vice, laxity in Sabbath observance, and intemperance. Ellen White would later incorporate many of these same themes into the final chapters of her own Apocalyptic work entitled The Great Controversy, but Strong and White differed in the solutions they provided, and in their views of the root causes of

---

<sup>30</sup> Charles Loring Brace, A History of Humane Progress Under Christianity (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Sons 1882).

<sup>31</sup> May, 113.

urban violence. White maintained that the worker was to blame for the strikes and bloodshed that plagued urban America. Strong, on the other hand, believed that the "feudal" brutality of wealthy capitalists, and the tragic class distinctions which resulted from their exploitation of the poor, was the most serious danger facing the nation's cities. These "feudal lords" were guilty of a "despotism vastly more oppressive and more exasperating than that against which the thirteen colonies rebelled."<sup>32</sup> The worker who was deprived of his share of the wealth was counseled by Strong to demonstrate his/her dissatisfaction until justice was done. He prophesied a soon coming crisis that would throw millions of Americans out of work, and force the nation to choose between the disaster of total degeneration and a renewed commitment to regeneration. His solution for urban poverty, called for an overhaul of the present system.

The slums are the 'putrefying sores' of the city. They may be mollified with the ointment of missions and altogether closed at one point, but it will be only to break out at another, until there is a constitutional treatment which shall purge the poison of the social system.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Josiah Strong, Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Course (New York, 1885) 106. Another popular book on the cities that Strong introduced was S.L. Thomas, Modern Cities and their Religious Problems. (New York: 1887).

<sup>33</sup> Josiah Strong, The New Era, or the Coming Kingdom (New York: 1893) 332.

In the minds of Strong, Brace, Willard and other late nineteenth century reformers,, American cities were in deep trouble. They were riddled with violence, but they were not beyond hope. The challenge that faced the nation in terms of its urban problems was a challenge that included women. Women's groups were the backbone of the temperance movement and various other social reform movements, they were granted a place in organized labor, and above all they were not expected to be passive in the face of exploitation and the demands of growing urbanization.

In contrast to this position, Adventists resisted the trends towards urban involvement by Evangelical churches in the late nineteenth century. Although the church recognized the need for evangelizing the great cities, it generally pursued a course of isolationism that fit consistently with its strong commitment to ruralism, domesticity and Millennialism. The great majority of Adventist women lived in rural homes throughout the century, and those who did have the "unfortunate" experience of living in a city were warned against unions, public activism and employment outside the home. Equally disturbing to Adventists were the constant amusements and corrupt influences of city life to which we will now turn our attention.

## WOMEN AND "SATANIC AMUSEMENTS

Just as there are many Adventist mothers, today, who refuse to work outside the home, others who feel guilty for doing so, and a great majority of Adventists who would never think of joining a labor union, because of the nineteenth century statements of Ellen White, so contemporary Adventism has also been significantly influenced by the prophetess in its views on Christian leisure, entertainment and amusements. At the time of this writing, most Adventist colleges and academies maintain regulations which forbid their students to attend theaters, dance, play cards, gamble, drink, smoke, wear jewelry, or participate in various other forms of activity or amusement. A century ago U.S.C. (a Methodist college), and many other Christian schools enforced similar or identical rules. Such regulations were commonplace among protestants outside of Adventism. But while Christian denominations today, have dropped rules of this kind, most Christian Adventists continue to believe that the church should play a prominent role in suggesting principles, and specific standards, concerning personal morality, which are to be observed by its members. Because attempts to regulate moral behavior are largely based on Ellen White's counsel, a proper understanding and appreciation for the nineteenth century

culture in which it was given seems to be both necessary and valuable for contemporary Adventists.

One of the "frightful evils" that troubled "protestant America" in the last half of the nineteenth century was the emergence of the "modern urban woman." She was the girl who dared to smoke, or take a social drink. She was the young lady who dated without a chaperone, and conscientiously observed the latest fashions. She was the independent woman who made her own decisions concerning business, career, and entertainment, and showed little regard for the "sacred" social traditions of the past. Her presence, combined with all the other changes that accompanied urbanization posed a very real threat to those who fought to preserve a "protestant America." By the end of the nineteenth century there was widespread concern and publicity given to the "revolution in morals" that was "destroying" America's cities. Urban lifestyle had provided women with the opportunity to move from the "domestic sphere" to the public sector, which according to one social reformer in New York allowed young people to "experiment with every kind of immorality without losing social standing."<sup>34</sup> With more than twice as many females in the work force in 1900 (21.2%) as there had been in 1860, it was not uncommon for young

---

<sup>34</sup> Edwin Seligman, The Social Evil (New York: Putnam, 1912) 11.



women to seek out amusement after work in the theaters, bowling allies, ice cream parlors, dance halls and saloons. Such behavior was considered scandalous by conservative protestant Christians and drew strong condemnation from social reformers. Public drinking, dancing, kissing, and other displays of affection caused many to lament the loss of traditional controls on women's behavior. Knowledge of drunken orgies in the big cities became notoriously widespread. One report in New York described "one hundred girls and boys" in a dance hall who were publicly intoxicated. "Many of the drunken girls were sitting in the corner of the hall on the laps of their equally intoxicated partners, who were hugging and kissing them."<sup>35</sup> In a Chicago bar room, drunken girls in their mid teens, were reported "lying in the arms" of young men, "with skirts up to their knees."<sup>36</sup> Similar scenes occurred with regularity in urban centers across the nation.

The dance hall, the theater, and the saloon were not new vices as far as the churches were concerned. As early as 1838 a popular protestant journal decried the "hideous deformities" of intemperance, and warned against the fatal mistake of allowing women to do the "unthinkable" by

---

<sup>35</sup> George Kneeland, Commercialized Prostitution in New York (Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1913, 1969) 70.

<sup>36</sup> Seligman, 11.

exposing their "more virtuous natures" to the theater.

But most of all, we ask, upon what principle can a delicate lady visit the theater? Man's moral constitutions is made of coarser materials, of 'firmer stuff' than that of a woman. His virtue is of a rougher cast, of a stronger fiber, and yet it withers and dies, in the atmosphere of the theater. What then must be its influence on the tender and delicate nature of female virtue? - Virtue which complains at the slightest breath of wrong - which shrinks back, like the sensitive plant, from the least touch of rudeness? Can her mind, thus delicately framed - thus nicely attuned to the sweet harmonies of virtue, listen to the polluting comedy, or behold the absorbing and corrupting tragedy, with impunity? ... No; she can never behold such things without a blush, or take pleasure in them without deep self-degradation.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the urban temptations of alcohol and the theater, church publications, by mid-century, were attacking the evils of circus going, card playing, and dancing as well. The "bodily movements" of dancing were denounced as, "indicative of the passions, emotions, and impulses of the animal soul; not of the spiritual nature of man."<sup>38</sup> But articles relating to the promiscuous nature of youthful music and activities increased tremendously in the churches between 1890 and 1925 as the problems of urbanization were amplified. Those involved in the entertainment industry

---

<sup>37</sup> Robert Turnbull, "Theatrical Amusements," Quarterly Christian Spectator 10:4, (1838) 557, 571, 572.

<sup>38</sup> "Dancing," Millennial Harbinger (Vol. 1851), 506; see also (1851) 467, 468.

were considered by many Christians to be lost.<sup>39</sup> And while saloons remained the chief villains in corrupting the young, the Methodist Review reminded its readers, in 1900, that it was only the worst of many tragic vices. "Closely associated with the saloon are found the billiard and pool room, the Sunday theater, the gambling den, and every other monster evil which preys upon society and ruins souls."<sup>40</sup>

Some of the other "monster evils" which were denounced by various churches as dangerous forms of entertainment, included, horse racing, football, boxing, bowling, chess, checker playing, dominos, novel reading, lotteries, the phonograph, drama, fairs, amusement parks, participation in secret societies or social clubs, bicycle riding, jazz, gluttony, unchaperoned dating, and Sabbath desecration.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> R. F. Horton, "Christ and Amusements" Christian World Pulpit (February 24, 1892) 118.

<sup>40</sup> "The Problem of Religious Life in the City," Methodist Review (May 1900) 406.

<sup>41</sup> I have compiled this list from the following primary and secondary sources; Harold Kent, "The Young Christian and Worldly Amusements," Moody Monthly 22 (Oct. 1921) 613; "Race-Track Gambling," Christian Advocate (March 28, 1924), 389; David Pivar, Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control (1868-1900) (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952), 211-216; David Cohn, The Good Old Days (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940) 106-126; Arthur Schlesinger, Learning How to Behave (New York: MacMillan, 1946) 39-55; Otto Bettmann, The Good Old Days, They Were Terrible (New York: Random House, 1974) 183-197; George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) 157-163.

Not only were such activities considered to be unacceptable by many Christians, because they could retard or prevent proper character development, they were also associated with the "wrong kind of people." Modern young women who indulged in such urban amusements were characterized as the kind who loved fashion, adornment, idleness and cared little for anything but their own pleasure. Many churches condemned the use of jewelry, make-up, fancy soaps, wigs, boots, short skirts, shaving of bodily hair, new fashions and hairstyles, manicures, cosmetics and perfumes for this very reason, because they were associated with promiscuity and the social rebellion of the modern urban woman, or linked directly to the practice of prostitution.<sup>42</sup>

There can be little doubt that in the context of Victorian Culture, many of the church's concerns were valid. They were shared by others in that society who had no direct connection with Protestantism. For example, football, which was played without pads in the late nineteenth century, and prize fighting, which was a bloody bare knuckle "sport," were much more brutal and dangerous than what they are today. Chess, checkers, and domino tournaments were so popular that they would consume as much time for some people as the television does today. Cards, bowling, billiards, horse

---

<sup>42</sup> Ruth Rosen, The Lost Sisterhood, (John's Hopkins University Press, 1982) 105-107, see also 86-111.

racing and fairs were all related to gambling and organized crime. Dance halls, saloons and theaters<sup>43</sup> were considered to be dens of intemperance, and were often connected with drunkenness or prostitution. The reading of romance novels provided ideas that conflicted with acceptable practices or etiquette, dating, courtship, petting and chaperones, and the use of cosmetics, jewelry and fashionable clothes which were associated with promiscuity or prostitution, at this time in American culture. However, some of the extreme views and fears relating to the "modern woman," had little connection with reality.

An article in the Christian Advocate entitled "Save America" linked the downfall of the nation to the modern woman who votes, keeps her own name after marriage, and uses birth control to escape her responsibility of child bearing. The author concluded, "if such a woman can be of any value to civilization she must first be civilized."<sup>44</sup> Other critics imagined the bicycle as a social vehicle for transporting girls into prostitution. "Alarmists even

---

<sup>43</sup> To understand the close connection between the theater and prostitution in nineteenth century America, see, Claudia Johnson, "That Guilty Third Tier: Prostitution in Nineteenth Century American Theaters," in Daniel Howe (ed.) Victorian America, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

<sup>44</sup> Rev. Charles Brooks, "Save America," Christian Advocate (September 26, 1925) 1222.

feared the bicycle seat might cause women's moral downfall."<sup>45</sup> Finally, there were those who felt that urban women were destroying the american home through their involvement in employment, clubs, and activities outside the domestic realm. As late as 1905, Grover Cleveland, the former president of the United States, raised questions about all female social activities outside the home in these words,

I am persuaded that there are woman's clubs whose objects and intents are not only harmful, but harmful in any way that directly menaces the integrity of our homes. I believe it should be boldly declared that the best and safest club for a woman to patronize is her home.<sup>46</sup>

Cleveland's concern that women stay in the home was reflective of the larger national attitude in America which associated the downfall of the nation and its youth with the emergence of the modern urban woman and her influence in society. As one reformer put it,

It (youth), is drunk with its own intoxicating perfume... and we surround that young, passionate, bursting blossom with every temptation to break down its resistant power, lure it into sentiment, pulsating desire and eroticism by lurid literature, moving pictures, tango dances, suggestive songs, cabaret, noise, music, light, life, rhythm, everywhere, until the senses are throbbing with leashed-in physical passion.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Pivar, 176.

<sup>46</sup> Ladies Home Journal (1905), quoted in Cohn, 98.

<sup>47</sup> Cecil L. Greil, quoted in his "Sex O'Clock in America," Current Opinion, 55 (1913) 114.

As urban centers continued to grow, and the great majority of Americans found themselves living in or close to a city, the problems of urbanism were not just the problems of the lower classes. As William Reedy put it, "if society is going to Hell by way of the tango, and the turkey trot, and the cabaret show, who started it in that direction? Why, "the best people."<sup>48</sup> It was the middle class who moved to the cities and exposed their families to the precarious pressures of the urban environment. They were the ones most deeply troubled about the future of the nation, and their children who seemed to be losing the values of protestant America. It is in this overall context of American urbanization that Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and values, can best be understood. Adventists were primarily a middle class movement. With the decline of the rural economy they too found themselves being forced towards the cities. As conservative Christians they attempted to maintain a cultural isolationism, which would protect them from the moral decay which they observed in the larger society. It is in this setting that Adventist views on personal morality were formed, and reinforced by prophetic pronouncements from the pen of Ellen White. Adventists were determined to be a "peculiar people," therefore it is not surprising that the church would place a premium on

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 113.

"peculiar womanhood."

As early as 1878 letters to the editor of the Review and Herald can be found containing bitter complaints that Adventists were becoming "like the world." A sister who had attended a campmeeting in Bunker Hill, Indiana, was horrified to find that she could "not tell an Adventist from a person of the world, unless by personal acquaintance."<sup>49</sup> The usual signs that she had grown accustomed to identifying God's "peculiar people" by were beginning to vanish. She was amazed to find women at the meeting who not only failed to observe the strictest simplicity in dress, and plainness of appearance, but actually dared to adorn themselves with the "foolish fashions of the day." The editorial response to this woman attempted to put her fears to rest.

There is one fact to be borne in mind, and that is, that our campmeetings are every year calling out a larger number of those not of our faith, and whose dress would not accord with the profession we make... In the matter of adornment and costly array, the dress of some of these would be such as any one acquainted<sup>50</sup> with the Bible standard must at once condemn.

Adventists have traditionally defined their "peculiarity" primarily in terms of personal morality. The church has been known for its total abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, its strict Sabbath observance, its

---

<sup>49</sup> "Like the World," Review and Herald 52:21 (November 21, 1878), 164.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



condemnation of adornment, fashion,, worldly appearance, and worldly amusement. Urbanism, threatened all of these outward marks of identification, and therefore provoked a strong reaction in Adventist publications. Almost every vice or "evil practice" connected with urbanism, condemned by the various protestant churches, was also specifically condemned in Adventist periodicals. Between 1857 and 1925 a tremendous number of articles appear in the Review, the Health Reformer, and the Signs of The Times relating to the wickedness of the cities and the dangers of worldly amusements and practices. Adventists were not only committed to denouncing such behavior in theory, but took pride in the fact that when compared to Methodists, and other denominations which claimed to maintain a high standard of personal morality, SDA's were in a class by themselves. The editors of the Review loved to print statements made by clergymen in other churches, which contradicted their own denominational disciplinary codes, and demonstrated a willingness to compromise their moral standards in the face of urban worldly pressures, in contrast to Adventists. A Methodist preacher is featured in one Review as a "lover of pleasure" because he suggested that church members should have the liberty to choose to dance or attend the theater. In the same issue the editors suggest that the Presbyterian 'Reformed Church' in Pittsburgh certainly needed "reforming" and should even

"promptly disband" unless its members could be taught to refrain from "profanity" and "disorderly conduct."<sup>51</sup>

A Reverend T.K. Beecher is also accused in the pages of the Review, of resorting to the "Devil's implements," and "seeking for light from the witch of Endor" because he refused to condemn all forms of dance in his church.<sup>52</sup>

Other ministers who claimed to take the "broadminded" position of recognizing that theatrical performances in the cities could be uplifting as well as evil, were denounced by Adventists as advocating the "broad way" which could lead only to "eternal destruction."<sup>53</sup>

In addition to condemning all of the urban vices that were frowned on by other Protestants, Adventist periodicals spoke out against several city amusements which were not mentioned in other denominational publications. One letter to the editor, in the Review, raised the question, "Is it right for Christians to attend circuses, or to have and use croquet grounds?" The editor's rather curt reply was, "We think the latter is a wicked waste of time, and the former a

---

<sup>51</sup> "Lovers of Pleasure," "Another Church Riot," Review and Herald 55 (April 22, 1880), 263.

<sup>52</sup> "Rev. T.K. Beecher on Dancing," R&H (May 8, 1969) 168.

<sup>53</sup> "Ministers and Theaters," R&H 55 (March 25, 1880) 201.

wicked waste of both time and money."<sup>54</sup> Another popular amusement that was branded as "demoralizing" and improper was attendance at skating rinks. The Review declared, that "Christians have no right to be connected with them as proprietors, managers, workmen, or attendants." Using scripture to support his editorial position Elder Morse quoted I Thess. 5:22, "'Abstain from all appearance of evil' is a sufficient exhortation relative to skating rinks, and the only safe way is to follow it."<sup>55</sup>

Two years later, Elder W. W. Prescott provided more specific elaboration on this point, in an article which linked "eating food for pleasure" and all other forms of "self gratification", and wordly amusement, to sensual excitement. In his view skating was a dangerous and objectionable form of entertainment, whether done on ice or in a roller rink, because it provided the opportunity for "promiscuous association." "It is because A's boy expects to meet B's girl there.... it is the associations, I say, again and again, these are often what give the appetite for pleasure."<sup>56</sup> It was this fear of arousing sensual

---

<sup>54</sup> "To Correspondents," R&H (November. 14, 1878) 160.

<sup>55</sup> "Scripture Questions," R&H (February 9, 1886) 91.

<sup>56</sup> W. W. Prescott, "The Use and Abuse of This World," R&H 65:3 (January 17, 1888) 1; continued in 65:4 (January 24, 1888).

excitement in the minds of youth that lay behind much of what was written against urban evils, such as dancing, fairs, the theater, novels, fashionable dress, bicycle riding, and popular music.<sup>57</sup> In good victorian fashion, Adventist periodicals associated the collapse of American society with the fact that "purity" was "laughed at" in the cities. All of the amusements targeted for youth were aimed at "the sexual instinct." "Why is jazz attractive?" asked one writer in the Signs, "the simple truth is that it is attractive because it excites the sexual instinct."<sup>58</sup> The cities and sex were inseparably linked because young women had abandoned their high moral standards of the past. Female moral laxity was directly tied to the "frightful intemperance" that affected women in the gay 90's. "The sacred precincts of womanhood" had been sabotaged by the cigarette and liquor bottle, taking a "vile" and tragic toll on city life.<sup>59</sup> This tendency of blaming women for the

---

<sup>57</sup> "Pleasure Seeking," R&H (June 6, 1882) 360; "Church Entertainments," R&H 65:43 (October 30, 1888); C. M. Fillmore, "How Shall We Amuse Ourselves?" R&H 21:23 (June 13, 1895); "Amusements," R&H (December 7, 1869) 190; "Things miscalled Amusements," R&H 38:9 (August 15, 1871); "Going Once, Just to See," R&H 57:13 (March 29, 1881); "Thirty Reasons Against Dancing," R&H (September 25, 1883) 614; "What's is the Objection to the Theater," Signs of the Times 30 (1904) 72; "Dancing and Card Playing Denounced," Signs of the Times 30 (1904).

<sup>58</sup> "Intemperance Among Women," R&H 71:46 (November 20, 1894).

urban evils of modern society continued in the twentieth century and became worse after the war. Woman was most responsible for the "satanic amusements" which troubled America.

The most sinister and menacing figure of our modern life is the cigarette-smoking, cocktail-drinking, pug-dog-nursing, half-dressed painted woman, who frequents the theaters, giggles at the cabarets, gambles in our drawing rooms or sits around our hotels, with her dress cut 'C' in front and 'V' behind! She is a living invitation to lust, and a walking advertisement of the fact that many of our modern women have lowered their standards of life!<sup>59</sup>

Adventists were determined to save their children from this personification of evil known as the "modern woman," and the lustful indulgence of city life, so they lived in the country whenever possible and sent their children to boarding academies and colleges in rural environments which strictly regulated all relationships between the sexes.<sup>60</sup> The Adventist woman became known for her plainness of appearance and generally grew up in an environment that was as sheltered and isolated from the "world" as possible. Such a lifestyle was part of the "prophetic blueprint" that

---

<sup>59</sup> Lucas Albert Reed, "When Religion Declines then Immorality Increases," Signs of the Times 12 (December 1920) 14.

<sup>60</sup> For a sampling of the kind of regulations which governed relationships between the sexes in Adventist Colleges, see Pacific Union College Bulletin (1906-1907) 9-10.

every young woman was taught and expected to 'observe' in the great Advent movement.

#### ELLEN WHITE AND "URBAN-PHOBIA"

If Adventists were not convinced that the cities were "off limits" for a christian, based on the testimony of their church publications or the views of other protestants who predicted that urbanization would lead to doomsday, they were sure to be persuaded by the "prophetic pronouncements" of Ellen White. Although the prophetess believed that Adventists were called by God to preach the second coming in the great urban centers of America, she insisted that this was not to be accomplished by living in the cities. "We must make wise plans to warn the cities, and at the same time live where we can shield our children and ourselves from the contaminating and demoralizing influences so prevalent in these places."<sup>61</sup> Like many in her day, both inside and outside of Adventism,<sup>62</sup> Ellen White believed that

---

<sup>61</sup> Ellen White, Review and Herald (July 5, 1906) quoted in her Life Sketches, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915) 410.

<sup>62</sup> See "Following the Cities of the Plain," Signs of the Times, editorial 12 (December 1920) 22 ff; and William Wirth, "Who Will Be Quaked Next?," Signs of the Times 52 (1925) 5 ff; for a non-Adventist example see, John Roach Straton, "Will New York Be Destroyed If It Does Not Repent?" (Published sermon - 1918), quoted in Marsden, 161-164.

the tragic disasters and natural catastrophes, which struck the major cities, were the direct judgements of God, provoked by immorality. In 1906 she warned Adventists to get "out of the cities, out of the cities! This is the message the Lord has been giving me. The earthquakes will come; the floods will come; and we are not to establish ourselves in the wicked cities."<sup>63</sup>

Four years earlier, Mrs. White had specifically singled out the San Francisco Bay area as a metropolis that was in danger of divine destruction. On September 1, 1902 she wrote,

Well equipped tent meetings should be held in the large cities, such as San Francisco; for not long hence these cities will suffer under the judgements of God. San Francisco and Oakland are becoming as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord will visit them in wrath.<sup>64</sup>

In July of 1906, Ellen referred back to a "vision of the night" that she received on April 16 of that year, just two days before the San Francisco earthquake. In this "special dream" she saw "buildings great and small falling to the ground. Pleasure resorts, theaters, hotels" were "shaken and shattered" as thousands were injured or killed." The destroying angels of God were at work. . . The angel that stood by my side then instructed me that but few have any

---

<sup>63</sup> White, Life Sketches 409.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 412..

conception of the wickedness existing in our world today, and especially the wickedness in the large cities."<sup>65</sup> She believed that this fatal calamity was just one of many divine judgements that would devastate the urban centers of the nation before the end of time. The cities were the targets of divine wrath, in her mind, for the two reasons we have already discussed. They were the centers of labor related violence and crime, and they were the source of satanic amusements and immoral practices which were distorting the nature of womanhood, and thereby subjecting young people to temptations that were destroying their characters. But even these factors did not fully account for the dangers that Adventists would face in the cities.

Ellen White, like Josiah Strong and John Roach Straton, had a crisis-centered view of the world, which focused on the impending doom that would accompany the evils of urbanism and the decline of rural, protestant America. However, unlike Strong and others who believed that there was still hope for America, she had a more pessimistic view which assumed an imminent apocalyptic end to history. In her book, The Great Controversy, which contained many of the same apocalyptic predictions that could be found in Strong's Our Country, Ellen White warned that Adventists who stayed

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 407, 408.



in the cities would be persecuted, and imprisoned as law breakers, for conscientiously keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath. Sunday legislation which was a major political issue in late nineteenth century America, played a prominent role in her scenario which prophesied that, through the two great errors of natural immortality and,

Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deception. While the former lays the foundations of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience. . . . The dignitaries of church and state will unite to bribe, persuade, or compel all classes to honor Sunday. The lack of divine authority will be supplied by oppressive enactments. political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance."<sup>66</sup>

Such a scenario, though unlikely in the nineteenth century; did not strike Americans who were used to the crisis oriented writings of men like Strong and Straton as being ludicrous. There was Sunday closing legislation that was being enforced in many states, and various reformers, temperance leaders and protestants were campaigning strongly and effectively for a national Sunday law. The imagined large scale persecution that Adventists anticipated in the

---

<sup>66</sup> Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1888, 1907, 1911, 1950) 588, 592.

large urban areas certainly served as an added incentive to follow the prophetess advice and "get out of the cities". What is more difficult to understand is why a majority of Adventists today continue to believe that the prophetic scenario of Ellen White has direct application for those living at the close of the twentieth century. As Jonathan Butler has observed,

Mrs. White's predictions of the future appeared as projections on a screen which only enlarged, dramatized and intensified the scenes of her contemporary world. . . Adventist beliefs on the second coming, the Sabbath, health, education, social welfare, church and state, big labor and the cities, all show Adventism to be a victorian protestant subculture.<sup>67</sup>

The same can be said for Adventism's strong commitment to domesticity, and its beliefs concerning separate sexual spheres and divinely ordained sexual roles. Ellen White and her fellow Advent believers defined the nature of true womanhood in the context of nineteenth century American culture. The enemies of traditional biblical female roles, as the church then perceived them, were urbanism, modernism, socialism, and feminism. In this context it is not difficult to understand why Adventists had strong suspicions concerning the cities, and phobias about the "modern urban woman" who seemed to be emerging all over America.

---

<sup>67</sup> Jonathan Butler "The world of E.G. White and The End of the World," Spectrum 10:2 (August 1979) 8, 10.

In an age when all of the conservative protestant churches were attacking the theater, dance halls, and every other urban vice "that faced young women, while popular women's magazines were speaking out against jewelry, cosmetics, perfume, romantic novels, unchaperoned dating, etc.<sup>68</sup>, and prostitution was increasing 400 per cent in the large cities over a thirty year span,<sup>69</sup> the writings of Ellen White, and other Adventists, on the subject of womanhood and urban life, do not appear to be fanatical or in any way extreme. They fit in with the cultural environment of victorian America. The question which Adventism must address, today, is how the church can appropriately apply the counsel of Ellen White concerning womanhood, motherhood, standards of personal morality, city life, and "satanic amusements"? A proper historical perspective will allow modern Adventists to examine the principles which inspired their nineteenth century predecessors to take specific stands on such issues, and redefine their meaning for the contemporary church. Such a task is necessary to avoid the pitfall of inconsistency. For example, Adventist continue to condemn the wearing of jewelry, while we fail to adequately discourage other

---

<sup>68</sup> Florence Hartley, The Ladies Book of Etiquette (Boston: 1873) 298; The Ladies Home Journal (August, 1911); Schlesinger, Learning 39ff.

<sup>69</sup> Bettmann, 98.

possible forms of materialism, adornment and extravagance. We arbitrarily label certain amusements, such as dancing and the theater, as unacceptable, while inconsistently failing to apply the principles behind such a position to other activities. These practices can easily serve to undermine the confidence of church members, and cause young people to lose respect for rules and regulations which they rightly expect to be logical. The challenge is for the church to avoid the extremes of both accomodation and legalism, to stand for principle without compromise.

A contextual understanding of Mrs. White's statements can help us to be more consistent in these areas, and will benefit Adventist women in general by relieving a lot of guilt which working mothers, and career women in the church feel, today, because the have been indoctrinated with a nineteenth century view of womanhood. To give careful consideration to historical context, is not to minimize or devalue the writings of Ellen White, but simply to view her works realistically. When she stated that every young woman should be able to "saddle and ride a horse" in the nineteenth century, reason dictates that we should not attempt to literally apply that statement, today, but the principle remains valid. Women should not be taught to become unnecessarily dependant upon men. In our modern culture this means much more than just making sure a young woman can drive a car or change a tire. It means encouraging young

women to fully develop whatever gifts and talents they have been given, and working to combat forces of injustice in society which serve to prevent the realization of human potentiality.

## CHAPTER THREE

## PRESERVING THE "VITAL FORCE":

## ADVENTISM AND VICTORIAN SEXUALITY

Females possess less vital force than the other sex, and are deprived very much of the bracing, invigorating air, by their in-doors life. The results of self-abuse in them is seen in various diseases, such as catarract, dropsy, headache, loss of memory and sight, great weakness in the back and loins, affections of the spine, the head often decays inwardly. Cancerous humor, which would lay dormant in the system their life-time, is inflamed, and commences its eating, destructive work. The mind is often utterly ruined and insanity takes place.

Ellen White - 1864

Like most boys growing up, I would often invite friends from school to stay overnight at our house on special occasions. However, I had one friend whose mother would never let him come. He was the preacher's kid, and a very friendly person, but his parents did not want him sleeping in the same room with other boys, because Ellen White had specifically spoken against such "polluting practices."

To save my children from being corrupted I have not allowed them to sleep in the same bed, or in the same room, with other boys, and have, as occasion has required when traveling, made a

scanty bed upon the floor for them, rather than have them lodge with others.<sup>1</sup>

Just as Ellen White was deeply influenced by her victorian culture in matters relating to sexual belief and practice, so Adventists, past and present, have struggled with various victorian concepts of sexuality because of the profound influence of Ellen White. These views have certainly affected the way church members have understood the nature of womanhood, and therefore, they deserve careful attention. In nineteenth century America the female sex was victimized by a host of sexual myths and stereotypes. Woman was perceived to be primarily responsible for increasing sexual immorality because she was seen as the chief source of sexual temptation. At the same time, woman was credited with having a greater and more natural inclination towards purity than man. In contrast to colonial America, where women were believed to possess a sex drive that was equal or stronger than men,<sup>2</sup> victorian America emphasized the "passionlessness" of females and the strong biological urges and drives of males, which were often referred to as "animal passions." This differentiation

---

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, An Appeal To Mothers: The Great Cause of the Physical, Mental and Moral Ruin of Many Children of Our Time (Battle Creek, MI: SDA Publ. Assoc., 1864) 11.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Clinton, The Other Civil War, American Women in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Hill and Way, 1984) 147.

between the sexes allowed many women, who saw themselves as the guardians of moral purity to use sexual control as a weapon, which gave them a very limited domestic power that could easily degenerate into manipulation.

The research of Peter Gay, and others, has demonstrated that a rich paradox of contradictory attitudes towards sex can be found among the middle classes in nineteenth century America. It is not fair to simply label victorian views of sexuality as prudish, repressive, and ignorant, as some historians of the past have done. However, these factors did play a prominent role in victorian thinking about sex and should not be minimized or denied. There is a public prudishness about sex which is evident in the nineteenth century, but also a preoccupation with the subject, particularly revealed in the private thoughts contained in diaries. Victorian values concerning sexual practice emphasized the importance of self-control, conservation of vital force, and postponement of gratification.<sup>3</sup> Sexual attitudes and actions, which were the natural outgrowth of nineteenth century theories of vitality, have often been mistakenly identified as victorian sexual repression. While many sexual taboos did exist during this era, they were thought at the time to be scientifically sound, based

---

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Howe, "Victorian Culture in America," in his Victorian America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976) 17.



on the latest medical and physiological research, or verified by the "science of phrenology." In Adventist literature, Ellen White is by far the most prominent and influential spokesperson on the subject of sex in the 1860's and '70's, but in the 1880's Dr. John Harvey Kellogg becomes the dominant speaker and authority in the field, who gains a significant reputation outside of Adventism through his highly influential books. This chapter will attempt to examine victorian views concerning vitality, sexuality, modesty, and social purity as they related to women in American culture, and then more specifically in the Adventist subculture, of the nineteenth century.

#### VITALISM AND SEX IN VICTORIAN AMERICA

Adventists, like most other health reformers in the last half of the nineteenth century, were extremely critical of the established medical profession. Therefore, it is not surprising that they praised and republished excerpts from an article, written by a physician named W. R. Dunham, which lauded the natural healing powers of the "vital force" within, and condemned the introduction of foreign substances such as medication and drugs which counteracted "vital force" by acting as a "poison" in the body. Dunham's views, which were published in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal in 1874, demonstrate the

popularity of vitalism during this period. His article was hailed in the Adventist Health Reformer,<sup>4</sup> to be "the first glimmering of light to enter the souls of those who oppose the wheels of progress," referring to medical doctors who had traditionally maintained that medication aided the function of "vital force." Four decades before this, Sylvester Graham had introduced the vitalistic physiology of the French pathologist Francois J. V. Broussous to America in a lecture tour through the major cities of the eastern states. This theory of vitality simply stated, taught that a mysterious energy, which sustained life, existed in a limited supply within every human organism, and produced the power that enabled all bodily functions to operate. It could not be reproduced, and once depleted would result in death. Various nineteenth century writers illustrated the concept of vitality by comparing it to a bank account. At birth an individual received a full supply of vital force from God. According to many authorities, men were granted more than women, accounting for their greater physical strength, vitality, and resistance to disease. Those who carefully observed the laws of temperance, and budgeted their vital force, would live a normal lifespan. Those who made extravagant withdrawals from their accounts by wasting

---

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Tenny, M.D., "Vitality Vs. Drugs," Health Reformer 9:1 (1874).

or prematurely exhausting this vital energy, would suffer dreaded diseases and go down to an early grave.<sup>5</sup>

Vitalism became popular in Adventist circles in the early 1860's through the writings of Ellen White who had been deeply influenced by Horace Mann and L. B. Coles, a Millerite physician.<sup>6</sup> Cole argued that vital force was transmitted in the body by electrical impulses that traveled through the nervous system. Though this theory eventually proved to have no more credibility than the practice of phrenology, such ideas were considered by many to be on the cutting edge of scientific thought at the time, and were deemed very relevant to the subject of sexuality.

Due to the fact that sensual excitement was believed to rapidly deplete the vital forces, and put a tremendous strain on the nervous system, excessive sexual activity was logically assumed to be highly detrimental to health. Mary and Thomas Nichols, like so many other reformers of the nineteenth century who subscribed to the theories of Graham, applied the teachings of vitalism directly to diet and sexual activity. Those who indulged in eating or drinking

---

<sup>5</sup> Sylvester Graham, Lectures On the Science of Human Life (Boston: Charles Pierce, 1848) 155-156; for a wider spectrum of views on vital force in the nineteenth century, see Nathan Hale, Freud and the Americans: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 34-35.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Numbers, Prophetess of Health, A Study of Ellen White (New York: Harper & Row 1976) 155-56.

stimulating foods such as meat, spices, sugar, tea, coffee and condiments were sure to trigger the "lower passions," and excite sexual urges that would "continually" seek "gratification." "Thus are men and women unduly stimulated, and consequently worn out, long before their time."<sup>7</sup> The Nichols like most other reformers believed that sexual intercourse in marriage should ideally occur once a month, but not more regularly than once a week.<sup>8</sup> They condemned thoughtless men, with language similar to what Ellen White would later use, who exceeded the bounds of moderation by making brutish sexual demands on their wives and warned that even women could be guilty of intemperance in her sexual desires. "Many a pale, thin, weakbacked man is suffering from gratifying the morbid desires of a strong, passionate, diseased woman."<sup>9</sup> Much more common, however, was the woman who attempted to control her sexual environment, by limiting conjugal activity in the name of preserving some vital

---

<sup>7</sup> Mary S. Gove (Nichols) Lectures To Ladies On Anatomy and Physiology (Boston: Saxton and Pierce, 1842) 178; Both James and Ellen White placed a similar emphasis on diet, "Ninety percent of the existing despondency, despair, and what i called religious insanity, is caused by abuses of the stomach," see James White, Health Reformer (January 1871) 132.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Nichols, Esoteric Anthropology (Port Chester NY: T.L. Nichols, 1853) 196-224; see also, James Ashton, The Book of Nature (New York: Brother Jonathan Office, 1865) 38-41.

<sup>9</sup> Nichols, 200.

energies.

As Nancy Cott has rightly pointed out, victorian culture placed a premium on female passionlessness. In the nineteenth century, it was believed that women generally lacked the passion, and sexual desires, that came naturally for men.<sup>10</sup> Some women capitalized on the idea that women were morally superior by denouncing men and advocating feminism. Angelina Grimke, for example stated in 1838 that, "men in general, the vast majority, believe most seriously that women were made to gratify their animal appetites, expressly to minister to their pleasure-yea Christian men too. My soul abhors such a base letting down of the high dignity of my nature as a woman."<sup>11</sup> While Ellen White never encouraged such a feminist position for Adventist women, she did speak out a great deal after her husband's death about the bestial passions of men, and in specific cases encouraged wives not to submit to their husband's desires, and in extreme situations to separate from them if necessary. If we were to look for a label that could describe this more "liberated" view of woman's rights to limit the frequency of sex in marriage, it would probably

---

<sup>10</sup> Nancy Cott, "Passionlessness," in Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Pleck (eds.) A Heritage of Her Own (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979) 175.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 174.

fit most closely with what Daniel Scott Smith has described as "domestic feminism." Smith has argued that woman's exertion of her right to control reproduction, which was advocated by health reformers in the 1850's and by the movement for "voluntary motherhood" in later decades, gave women a power within the family that resulted in a substantial drop in the birth rate by the end of the century. Sexual control and family limitation fit naturally with the notion of passionlessness, as practical and powerful tools that gave the victorian woman greater freedom, and in some cases allowed her to manipulate her domestic environment.<sup>12</sup>

It should also be recognized that various reformers and feminists in victorian culture took extreme positions with regard to the issue of sexuality. On the one hand, there were a small number of feminists who were sexual radicals and advocates of "free love." Most prominent among them was Victoria Woodhull, who rebelled against the traditional restraints of domesticity. She championed the cause of the notorious "free love crusaders," by arguing for full sexual

---

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Scott Smith, "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism," in Cott and Pleck, 222-245; in the postscript at the end of this article Smith acknowledges that his original claim that "domestic feminism" opened the door for woman;s suffrage was overstated and failed to properly account for the public/private distinctions of the 19th century. It was the public women and not the "domestic feminists" who were primarily responsible for suffrage.

autonomy for women in matters such as birth control, abortion and pornography. She actively opposed the social purity crusade of Anthony Comstock, believing it to be moralistic sexual hypocrisy which promoted a double standard. To prove her point, she published a scandalous account of the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher's adulterous affair with Elizabeth Tilton, the wife of his best friend. Although the charges were true, this inexcusable violation of victorian propriety led to her arrest and conviction. She was the first person prosecuted for breaking the "comstock Law." However, her accusations concerning the "double standard" seemed to be verified when Mrs. Tilton was convicted of adultery and Beecher was acquitted by a hung jury.<sup>13</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, there were a number of reformers and prominent women in the nineteenth century, who advocated either celibacy or a strict chastity that allowed sex solely for purposes of reproduction. Among such reformers some commonly taught that the best form of birth control was "abstinence." Men in particular were warned that for the sake of their own moral and physical health, they must combat their "insatiable and wasteful appetites" by becoming experts in "sexual restraint" and

---

<sup>13</sup> Clinton, 154-157.

"athletes of continence."<sup>14</sup> According to Eliza Farnham, a temperance and feminist reformer, man's function was not to make woman the object of his lust, but to protect her maternity and respect her "superior sexuality." She argued that "sex is a grade of development. . . the feminine exceeds the masculine by the differentiation of two organs (uterus and mammary glands) more than the latter employ . . these may be termed the superior maternal system."<sup>15</sup> In her view man was expected to reverence woman by overcoming his "unextinguishable appetites."

No less extreme were the sexual views propounded by well known sectarian and utopian religious movements in the nineteenth century. As Lawrence Foster has demonstrated, groups with sexual practices as widely diverse as the Shakers (absolute celibacy), the Oneida community (complex marriage), and Mormons (polygamy), all still reflected a victorian emphasis on sexual restrictions and self-control. Mormonism taught that pleasure was not the goal of sex, but procreation. Ann Lee and the Shakers believed that sexual intercourse was a carnal activity, and that fleshly desires

---

<sup>14</sup> Donald Kennon, A Knit of Identity: Marriage and Reform in Mid-Victorian America (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, Ann Arbor, MI: University microfilms, 1981) 463, 464; See also Ruth Rosen, The Lost Sisterhood. (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1982) 169-172.

<sup>15</sup> Eliza Farnham, Woman and Her Era (New York: A. J. Davis, 1864) I, 42.



must be kept totally in check. John Humphrey Noyes and his Oneida followers, though sometimes branded as libertines, exhibited tremendous sexual self-control through their practices of "male continence" and "coitus reservatus."<sup>16</sup>

In these and other religious groups, as well as in the various reform movements of the nineteenth century, sexual sublimation became a common and significant phenomenon.<sup>17</sup> Women especially found religion and reform movements to be causes in which they could so invest their drives and energies that "spiritual ecstasy" for many replaced the need for "sexual ecstasy." This tendency towards sexual sublimation, combined with belief in the theory of vitalism, led many women, including Ellen White, to define "sexual excess" in terms generally considered to be extreme by modern standards. However, scholars who accuse these reformers and religious leaders of advocating sexual views which were the irrational result of repressed eroticism, fail to recognize that generally the problem was not repression, but a very strong commitment to sexual restraint which was based on the faulty theory of vitalism. To what extent sexual restraint was practiced by the general

---

<sup>16</sup> Lawrence Foster, Religion and Sexuality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 234 ff.

<sup>17</sup> For a sociological and anthropological discussion of this phenomenon see, I.M. Lewis, Ecstatic Religion (New York: Penguin, 1971, 1978) 18-36.

population is unclear, but the Mosher study<sup>18</sup> which began in 1892, though certainly not representative of national attitudes, at least demonstrated that there were a significant number of women who were unashamed of erotic sexual pleasure. However, women were known for their sexual restraint much more than their passion in Victorian culture.

Not only did many nineteenth century women speak out strongly against sexual excess, they also became more conscious and condemning of sexual exploitation. This was particularly true with regard to medical practice. Physicians were even less popular with feminists in the 1850's, 60's and 70's than they were with health reformers, such as Adventists. "Woman's Rights" advocates like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Matilda Gage, referred to male medical control over the female body, particularly in regard to abortion and conception, as tyrannical exploitation which led to the "degradation of woman." The guilt for "crimes" committed against the female body, in the name of medicine, were to be placed "at the door of the male sex."<sup>19</sup> The

---

<sup>18</sup> For a detailed discussion of the "Mosher Survey," see, Peter Gay, The Bourgeois Experience (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) 35-44.

<sup>19</sup> See Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Infanticide and Prostitution," Revolution 1:14 (April 19, 1868) 215-216; for a discussion of the medical crusades of the 1850's and

horrors which women suffered at the hands of male physicians in the nineteenth century were frightening. In the 1850's and 60's prominent gynecologists advocated and performed clitoridectomy (the surgical removal of the skinhood above the clitoris) to treat female nervous disorders. Headaches, backaches, and nearly all other ailments in women were attributed to the uterus. Hysteria (which was diagnosed in epidemic numbers among women) was believed to be the result of uterine irritation, and gonhorrea was linked to having sex during the "monthly period." Menstruation was treated by many doctors through the practice of placing leeches on the vulva or neck of the uterus. In 1878, a British medical journal ran a six month correspondence on "whether hams could be turned rancid by the touch of a menstruating woman." As late as the 1870's, it was still common for abortionists to pull a tooth as part of their routine for ending a pregnancy." Ovariectomy or female castration was a popular operation performed by doctors to treat hysteria and neuroses well into the 1890's and nearly all of these

---

feminist opposition see, John Harper, "Be Fruitful and Multiply" in Carol Berkin and Mary Norton, (ed.,) "Women of America: A History", (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 253-260; and James C. Mohr, "Abortion in America," Linda Kerber and Jane Matthews (eds). Women's America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 179-189.

surgeries and practices were performed without proper anesthetics.<sup>20</sup>

The medical ignorance, which reigned supreme in the nineteenth century, also contributed to the myths and unhealthy phobias connected with the practice of masturbation. This phobia which began in England in the 1750's<sup>21</sup> and flourished in the United States throughout the nineteenth century was closely related to the theory of "spermatic economy," which taught that the male sperm contained a sacred lifegiving power that was sinful to waste,<sup>22</sup> and more importantly to the widespread belief in vitalism which was falsely linked to Newtonian physics.<sup>23</sup> Self-abuse was blamed for almost every conceivable disease (blindness, deformity, insanity, etc.) and evil by various physicians, reformers and religious leaders. The incidence

---

<sup>20</sup> Most of these practices are documented in G.V. Barker-Benfield, The Horrors of the Half Known Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) 107-125, 276-278. Barker-Benfield has contributed a great deal of valuable research but generalized conclusions drawn from the case studies provided can only be described as unfortunate reductionism. Other helpful sources which refer to these medical atrocities are Mohr, 181; Clinton, 151-154; Reay Tannahill, Sex in History (New York: Stein and Day, 1980) 351-353; and Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) 88.

<sup>21</sup> Barker-Benfield, 165.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 267, 299.

<sup>23</sup> Rosen, 169-172.

of this "vice" especially among women was particularly disturbing to some victorian "experts" who believed that "America led the world" in self-abuse.<sup>24</sup> Though most agreed that this "sin" was more common among men, there was disagreement over which sex suffered the most physical harm from the practice of "secret vice." The amount of anxiety that parents in general suffered from the "masturbation scares" of the nineteenth century, is evident from the fact that a number of stores and catalogues sold "apparatuses against onanism"<sup>25</sup> in both male and female models. These devices, which resembled chastity belts, were strapped onto children before they went to bed at night and prevented any fondling of the genitals. As we shall later see, self-abuse was a major concern expressed in the early writings of Ellen White who subscribed to the notion that it did the greatest harm to women.

A final sexual theme in nineteenth century America, that caused considerable commotion within Adventist circles, was the issue of modesty and dress. While American women in general were thought to be the lovers of display, fashion, and adornment, according to Frances Trollope, an internatio-

---

<sup>24</sup> Barker-Benfield, 272-274.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Gay, 183, supplies pictures of what these sexual devices looked alike.

nal authority on dress and domestic manners,<sup>26</sup> a large number of American Protestants condemned those who did not pursue simplicity and plainness in all things. This was more common before 1900, but even during the first quarter of the twentieth century conservative Christian periodicals strongly attacked the "Satanically inspired," "Abominable fashions," in woman's dress. Women were informed that the true Christian would not be seen with "short skirts," "low necks," "naked arms," "bobbed hair," "pencilled eyebrows," or "painted cheeks." Any dress which encouraged the "familiarities" of men was condemned.<sup>27</sup> Young ladies were taught that men could not be held responsible for their sexual behavior if women did not simply and modestly cover their bodies and limbs with the greatest care. As one preacher put it in the Moody Monthly,

Every man has a quantity of dynamite, or its equivalent, in him. It did not come to him by cultivation, and it will not leave him by combatting. The frequent explosion of that dynamite and its result is a tragic part of the world's history. The matches have, as a rule, been in the hands of the world's womanhood . . .

---

<sup>26</sup> Francis Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans (New York: Knopf, 1949) 74ff, 299, 423. See also Arthur Schlesinger Learning How To Behave 39-55 and David Cohn, The Good Old Days (New York: Knopf, 1940) 106-126.

<sup>27</sup> See "Girls and Their Perils," Moody Monthly editorial (January 1925) 213; and "If a Woman Have Long Hair It Is a Glory To Her," Moody Monthly editorial (November 1924) 101, 102.

Away then with the present day styles of women's dress.<sup>28</sup>

Between 1850 and 1925 the topic of "women's fashions" and their relationship to sexual allure, seemed to receive almost constant attention in America. During the 1850's most women wore steel wired hoop skirts, or layered petticoats and vicelike corsets with long skirts that dragged the ground. Such apparel weighed as much as fifteen pounds and caused many women to faint or suffer physical injury. At the beginning of the decade, as a protest against such insanity, Elizabeth Miller created what would become a whole new style of woman's dress. She visited her cousin, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, wearing a short skirt over a pair of pants. When feminists in Seneca Falls decided to adopt this new costume, including Amelia Bloomer who promoted it in her Temperance magazine, The Lily, the national press ridiculed it as the "bloomer." They also branded feminists such as Stanton, Lucy Stone, Susan Anthony and the Grimke sisters who attempted to popularize such a fashion as "bloomerites."<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Reverend A. R. Funderburk, "The Word of God On Women's Dress," Moody Monthly (January 1922) 729.

<sup>29</sup> Aileen Kraditor, Up From The Pedestal (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1968) 123-125; See also Carrie Hall, From Hoopskirts to Nudity (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1938), and Andrew Sinclair, The Emancipation of the American Woman (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 102-105.

At first Stanton attempted to defend the new dress, stating that she would not be a slave to fashion like so many others who had become "hopeless martyrs to the inventions of some parisian imp" who sought to strip women of "all freedom of breath and motion." She even went so far as to wear the dress without the pants, which prompted a quick rebuke from Anthony who worried that "bloomers" would be accused of "duffing their pants" to better "display their legs." But as the ridicule and hostility mounted, Stanton complained that the "physical freedom" of the new dress was not worth the "mental bondage," and damage that was being done to other reform efforts."<sup>30</sup> Gradually most of the feminists abandoned the "reform dress."

It is difficult for the modern mind to grasp how strongly victorian Americans felt about matters relating to modesty and fashion. It is particularly puzzling if one is not familiar with the cultural beliefs of the day which, due to medical ignorance, often erroneously linked various practices to negative sexual consequences. For example, women were told that wearing hair pieces on the back of their heads would unduly stimulate their sexual passions,

---

<sup>30</sup> Stanton, quoted in Clinton, 148-149; Elizabeth Stanton, History of Woman Suffrage (New York: Arno, 1969) I, 470; Sinclair, 106; Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States (New York: Atheneum, 1970) 84.



based on the beliefs of phrenology. W. A. Alcott warned that "wearing one's hat in the house tends to vice and immorality." And as late as 1922 women were still being arrested on the beaches of America for exposing too much of their arms.<sup>31</sup> It was this kind of victorian world that Ellen White lived in when she wrote her counsels to Adventist women on dress, modesty, and sex.

#### ANIMALISM, ORNANISM, ADVENTISM, AND ELLEN WHITE

Adventist thinking on the subject of human sexuality, between 1850 and 1925, is typified in the writings of two successive spokespersons in the church, who voiced ideas that strongly reflected the victorian bias in American cultural thought relating to sex. In the 1860's and '70's Ellen White wrote a great deal on the topic of animalism and sexual temptation, which certainly represented conservative Christian thinking in America on these matters. However, her pen went noticeably silent on this subject when Dr. John Harvey Kellogg emerged as the denominational authority on human sexuality in the early 1880's. He published several books and articles relating to sex beginning in 1877 which, though still very victorian in nature, were written in the

---

<sup>31</sup> Concerning hair pieces, see, Numbers, 149; Alcott is quoted in Schlesinger, 20; and overexposure of the arm is discussed in Ira Reiss, Premarital Sexual Standards in America (New York: MacMillan, 1960) 64.

language and from the standpoint of a leading physician, which gave his works greater credibility with the public. Kellogg basically rejected Freudian theories relating to sex, and therefore disagreed with his Adventist colleague Dr. William S. Sadler who had studied with him at Battle Creek, but later adopted Freudian views and rejected Adventism. Sadler's influence within the Adventist church did not compare to that of either Mrs. White's or Dr. Kellogg's, partly because he became disillusioned with Ellen White's inspirational claims in the early 1900's. Kellogg, who experienced similar disillusionment, made a tremendous impact on Adventism before his conflicts with the prophetess erupted, but such was not the case with Sadler. However, Sadler did express views on the topic of sexuality that represented the modern era of sexual understanding, which dawned in the early twentieth century, rejecting many of the myths regarding sex that had flourished in Victorian America. The remainder of the chapter will examine the views of Ellen White and John Harvey Kellogg on the subject of sex, and relate them to Adventist concepts of womanhood.

Ellen White, like most other reformers in the nineteenth century was not a prude or a sexually repressed neurotic, in spite of the fact that her writings on the subject of sex provide ammunition to support such accusations for critics who are not familiar with their

proper historical context. When Mrs. White was confronted with reformers who were considered to be extremists in her day, she could be very blunt in her dismissal of such views. One man who approached Ellen with a tract that he had written, urging that sex be confined to procreation only, was abruptly told to "go home and be a man."<sup>32</sup> Her views on sex-related topics such as vitalism, animal magnetism, onanism, etc., were not considered to be extreme or unusual by contemporary readers. However, it is unfortunate that such views have been republished in recent years, without being placed in any kind of proper historical perspective, and passed off to Adventist readers as if they were directed to people living in the 1980's.<sup>33</sup>

The earliest works written by Ellen White, pertaining to sex were published in two books that appeared six years apart. The first volume entitled, An Appeal To Mothers, was made available in 1864, and according to Mrs. White was based on information she had received in vision the year

---

<sup>32</sup> Cited in, White Estate, Critique of Prophetess of Health (Washington D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1977) 15.

<sup>33</sup> See, Ellen G. White, A Solemn Appeal (Sacramento: Northwestern Publ. Assoc., n.d., reprint 1980); and Ellen G. White, Mind, Character, and Personality: Guidelines to Mental and Spiritual Health (Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1977) II, the unpaginated forward applies counsels contained in these volumes to contemporary life without framing it in its appropriate historical context.

before. The second much larger volume appeared in 1870 under the descriptive title, A Solemn Appeal Relative to Solitary Vice and the Abuses and Excesses of the Marriage Relation. This book was edited by James White, and not only offered a great amount of new material that Ellen had "received in vision" two years earlier, but also included several articles written by experts with whom Adventists agreed. These works both contain a great deal on the topics of women and sex, which would generally be considered quite bizarre in the light of modern knowledge, but that made perfect sense based on the "scientific presuppositions" and misconceptions which flourished in the nineteenth century.

According to Ellen White, the indulgence of "animalistic propensities" was the major cause of nearly all of the mental and physical diseases that plagued the human race. She strongly agreed with the theories of vitality which taught that the mind and body could not function without the "mysterious energy," or vital force, which was divinely implanted in limited quantities at birth. Anything which unduly drained the "vital energies" disturbed the delicate "electrical balance" in the body. Any form of intemperance prevented the brain from receiving "pure blood" and thereby reduced its ability to distribute "vital force" to bodily organs through the electrical impulses that were transmitted through the nervous system. Repeated intem-

perance would rapidly accelerate the depletion of "vital force" leading to the destruction of the nervous system, and both physical and mental health.<sup>34</sup> This somatic understanding of human physiology led Ellen White to the following conclusions:

1. That there was an absolute cause/effect relationship between the mind and body - 90 percent of all physical diseases originated in the mind, and whatever hurt the body would ultimately destroy the mind.<sup>35</sup>

2. That the increasing indulgence of appetite and lustful passion (particularly evident in the practices of promiscuity, marital excess, and solitary vice), was responsible for the gross degeneration of the human race, and the tremendous decrease in lifespan and physical stature which had occurred since Adam and Eve.<sup>36</sup>

3. That supernatural communications, both divine and satanic, were transmitted through the "electric currents" of the nervous system. She believed that her "visions" were from God, but that the "visions" of her contemporaries such

---

<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White, Testimonies To The Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948) III, 69, 485; Appeal To Mothers, 27-30.

<sup>35</sup> White, Testimonies V, 444.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Statements first published in 1873, Testimonies III, 138, 139 and IV, 29; See also Appeal To Mothers, 46.

as Mary Baker Eddy, for example, were demonically inspired through mesmerism or spiritualism.<sup>37</sup>

As one psychologist has put it, "The world as seen by Ellen White consisted of two spheres; the material one revealed by our senses, and an invisible one inhabited by good and evil angels. Electric or magnetic forces permitted interaction between the spheres."<sup>38</sup>

4. Finally, and most importantly for this study, Ellen White believed that males were endowed with a greater supply of "vital force" than females. This "fact" made women much more vulnerable to both physical and mental disease, and meant that the nourishment of sensual propensities, and indulgence of lustful desires; particularly through the practice of masturbation, would lead to the most dire consequences for young women whose nervous systems were incapable of absorbing the shock of sexual excitement. In her Appeal To Mothers in 1864 she wrote,

Females possess less vital force than the other sex, and are deprived very much of the bracing, invigorating air, by their in-doors life. The results of self-abuse in them is seen in various diseases, such as catarracts, dropsy, headache, loss of memory and sight, great weakness in the back and loins, affections to the spine, the head often decays inwardly. Cancerous humor,

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Testimonies, IV, 193.

<sup>38</sup> Janet Numbers and Ron Numbers, "The Psychological World of Ellen White," Spectrum 14:1 (Aug. 1983) 25.

which would lay dormant in the system their life-time, is inflamed, and commences its eating, destructive work. The mind is <sup>39</sup>often utterly ruined, and insanity takes place.

That women could even be guilty of such "disgusting and degrading" practices was difficult for the victorian mind to believe, much less speak and write about openly. Mrs. White who had been sheltered from society by a youthful injury that "preserved" her in "blissful ignorance of the secret vices of the young," first discovered the devastation of this "life-threatening practice" from "the private death bed confessions of some females who had completed the work of ruin"<sup>40</sup> and felt morally obligated to warn other women about the alarming consequences of such a sinful act. In both, Appeal to Mothers and A Solemn Appeal, great efforts are made to cite the testimony of a large number of experts or authorities who agreed with Ellen White. The preface statements which proceed their articles make it clear that the Whites believed the addition of such material served to support what the prophetess was saying with "scientific facts and figures." Though nine out of ten men were believed to be "self-abusers," many "experts" shared the fear that masturbation was becoming "frightfully common" among women. One doctor insisted that "our American women

---

<sup>39</sup> White, Appeal To Mothers, 27.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 12, 13.

as a class are almost universally afflicted with this exhausting loss.<sup>41</sup> What made this so threatening was the belief that the results of such a practice were most destructive and "most dreadful among the females."<sup>42</sup>

The nineteenth century belief that male semen contained tremendous "vitalizing power," demonstrated by the claim "that one ounce of it is [was] equal to forty ounces of blood in any other part of the body,"<sup>43</sup> laid the foundation for most theories that considered it sinful and harmful to waste sperm. However, the rationale for condemning female self-abuse and sexual excess was slightly different.

Females, although they do not lose semen, induce by this habit "[self-abuse] a discharge from the vagina which proves a terrible drain upon the system. This discharge, called 'leucorrhea,' or 'whites,' is often the beginning of the most dreadful and fatal diseases. It is the precursor of congestion, inflammation, ulceration, tumors, and concerns of the womb."<sup>44</sup>

The fact that such emissions could be discharged during the sleeping hours led to a condemnation of lustful thoughts which supposedly provoked such dreams. "'But', you say, 'even the visions of the night provoke unchastity. We are

---

<sup>41</sup> Dr. E.P. Miller, in White, A Solemn Appeal, 93.

<sup>42</sup> "Chastity" an anonymous essay quoting leading sexual authorities attached to Ellen White's Appeal to Mothers, 40.

<sup>43</sup> Miller, A Solemn Appeal, 82.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 92, 93.



defiled even in our dreams.' You must be chaste while awake, if you would be so while asleep."<sup>45</sup>

Ellen White, like almost all health reformers of the nineteenth century, insisted on total abstinence when she discusses the self-polluting practice of masturbation. For some unknown reason it was considered to be ten times more harmful than other sexual practices such as premarital promiscuity, general licentiousness and marital excess. O.S. Fowler, who attempted to justify such a claim, by arguing that self-abuse caused impotency, greater damage to the nervous system and sexual organs, and shameful self-abhorrance stated,

If asked which I should prefer a child of mine to practice [self-abuse vs. other forms of sexual licentiousness], O merciful God! Deliver me from so dreadful a dilemma, my unequivocal answer would be, 'rather let my dear child DIE, be it even by revolting suicide or any other cup of bitterness sooner! Nothing, oh fond parent, can render your beloved offspring more completely wretched!'<sup>46</sup>

The fact that James and Ellen endorsed and published these views, for fellow Adventists, demonstrates the depths of revulsion which parents were encouraged to feel for such a practice, and the depths of guilt which their children must have suffered, particularly young women who were

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., "Chastity," 48.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., O.S. Fowler, "Evils and Remedy," 243.

thought to be most "wretchedly affected."

It is indeed unfortunate that the great majority of twentieth century Adventists who have written on the subject of sex have either blindly accepted the vitalistic notions of Mrs. White, in regard to masturbation, or have avoided the subject altogether. Even the few who have dared to differ with the prophetess in print have either accused Ellen White of having anti-sex bias or have reinterpreted her statements concerning "animal passions," and "self-abuse" to mean something other than what they were intended to mean in their nineteenth century context.<sup>47</sup>

As a university Chaplain and counselor I have been reminded on various occasions that this question has very practical consequences for many guilt-ridden Adventist young people. Ellen White was not anti-sex in her victorian context nor was she immune to the sexual misconceptions which flourished in her day, and certainly influenced her thinking as we shall continue to see.

While Ellen White's first book, Appeal To Mothers, focused almost completely on the dangers of self-abuse, A Solemn Appeal dealt with unchastity, mental adultery, and marital excess, in addition to solitary vice. This work warns against marriage where there is significant age

---

<sup>47</sup> See Roy Gravesen, "A Physician Reviews Adventist Sexual Advice Books," Spectrum 15:1 (May 1984) 19-21.

discrepancy, particularly when the woman is older. In such cases the older partner was thought to drain away the "vitality" of the younger companion.<sup>48</sup> Abortion is also strongly condemned as murder, and sexual excess is defined and rebuked in specific terms. While there is no evidence to suggest that Mrs. White believed that sex was to be limited just to procreative functions, all indications point to the conclusion that she and her husband were in wholehearted agreement with the view supported by most vitalistic reformers, who believed that the ideal was "once a month" and that even "once a week" was certainly excessive.

Those whose intellectuality and morality are feeble, may spend their surplus vitality on this passion with less injury, yet cannot cultivate their higher faculties while they thus revel in lust. Let such remain all animal and revel on . . . red faced, bloated, course grained, gouty subjects - it matters little what becomes of them. . . . But for light-built, fine-skinned, fine-haired, spare-built, sharp-featured, light-eyed persons, of either sex, to indulge, even in wedlock, as often as the moon quarters, is gradual but effectual destruction of both soul and body.<sup>49</sup>

Any sexual indulgence after conception was considered dangerous for women because it allegedly drained the vital energies of the mother, and caused her unborn child to

---

<sup>48</sup> Ellen White, A Solemn Appeal, 107-109.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 200.

inherit abnormal sensual passions.<sup>50</sup> Of even greater concern was the popular notion, which the Whites also endorsed in their book, that unchastity and "marital excess" produced significant confusion in terms of sexual role identity. This theory maintained that such practices detracted from "the manliness of the male, and the femininity of the female." The man who overindulged would become an "effeminate sickling," feeble, whining, and weak. He would be "marred by the defects" of woman, without possessing her virtues, and become a "drone to himself and society." In the case of the female, her "natural beauty, grace, refinement, purity, elegance, fascination and charms" would be lost. Her "native enthusiasm, sweetness and amiableness" disappear, and she would become a "mongrel." Accordingly, sexual temperance preserves womanhood "much more effectually than all the padding, bustles, and fashionable attire in the world."<sup>51</sup> The only evidence offered to support these claims, though the author presumed that no proof was needed since the truth was self-evident, is the argument that animals that lose their "sexual apparatus" or organs also lose their "spirit," - "This principle applies throughout the animal kingdom, and is

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 239, 240.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 10, 207-210.

equally true of man [humans]."<sup>52</sup> That well known health reformers and physicians could advocate such positions in the nineteenth century puts the early statements of Ellen White concerning sex in a very readable context, and gives some insight into the naivete of victorian sexual views which contributed to sexist ideologies.

After 1870 very little from the pen of Ellen White appeared which dealt directly with the subject of sex. However, a great deal was published, particularly with regard to women, on the subject of dress, fashion, and modesty, which was certainly related to sexuality and sexual temptation. Here again, the topic of sexual identity received significant attention. After her "health reform vision" in 1863 Mrs. White emphasized the need for dietary reforms that would serve to reduce rather than stimulating animalistic passions, but she surprisingly refused to adopt the reform dress for women which had become quite popular in reform circles. Her opposition to the "bloomer" was based on three primary factors.<sup>53</sup> Firstly, Ellen rejected the reform dress because it was worn by many spiritualists whom she believed to be agents of Satan, and from whom she made

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>53</sup> To explore these factors more deeply, see Ellen G. White, "The Cause in the East," 1863 statement, Testimonies I, 421, 433, 465; see also Selected Messages II, 477, 478; Kennon, 229-282; and Numbers, 129-150.

every effort to disassociate herself. Secondly, the prophetess refused to embrace such apparel because of its close association with the woman's rights movement, which Ellen opposed, and condemned as incompatible with the message of Adventism. Finally, Mrs. White turned her back on the reform dress, most of all, because she felt that it violated the law of God in regard to sexual role identity and caused "confusion" concerning the "clear cut" distinctions which were to "separate male and female in appearance. A number of statements condemning the reform dress, or American costume as it was sometimes called, were issued by Ellen White after 1863.

There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination.<sup>54</sup>

She declared that those who wore the American costume "reversed God's order" by disregarding Deutoronomy 22:5, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto man." Caps, pants, vests, coats and boots were all mentioned as inappropriate attire for women. Several other arguments were also offered against the reform dress. It would cause a "great increase in crime." It was "not modest." It did not befit "humble females," and it would bring "derision on

---

<sup>54</sup> Ellen White, Testimonies I, 421.

God's Advent people." For all of these reasons the prophetess warned that "God would not have his people adopt the so-called reform dress."<sup>55</sup> However, the question of how Adventist women were to dress, in a way that would imitate neither the world nor reformers, still remained an issue of great concern. In 1866 the Battle Creek Church (which was the largest in the denomination) adopted the following resolutions on dress, which were aimed primarily at women, to clarify exactly where Adventists stood on this matter.

Point 1. We believe, as a church, that it is the duty of our members in all matters of dress, to be SCRUPULOUSLY PLAIN.

Point 2. We regard plumes, feathers, flowers, and superfluous bonnet ornaments, as only the outward index of a vain heart, and as such are not to be tolerated in any of our members.

Point 3. JEWELRY. - We believe that every species of gold, silver, coral, pearl, rubber, and hair jewelry, are not only entirely superfluous, but strictly forbidden by the plain teachings of the Scriptures.

Point 4. TRIMMING OF DRESSES. - We hold that founces, loops and a profuseness of ribbons, cording, braid embroidery, button, etc., in dress trimmings, are vanities condemned by the Bible, (See Isaiah 3), and consequently should not be countenanced by "women professing godliness."

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 421, 422, 465; Ellen White, Selected Messages II, 477, 478; These statements are applied out of their historical context to modern Adventists in a column written by Mrs. Pierson who was the General Conference President's wife, see, "Man or Woman," Ministry (May 1971) 48.

Point 5. LOW NECKED DRESSES. - These we believe are a disgrace to community, and a sin in the church; and all who patronize this shameful fashion, transgress the apostle's command to "adorn themselves in modest apparel." I Tim. 2, 9.

Point 6. DRESSING THE HAIR. We believe that the extravagant dressing and ornamenting of the hair, so common at this time, is condemned by the apostle; (I Tim. 2:9); and that the various beaded and spangled net-works, such as are used to contain those artificial deformities called "water-falls," "water-wheels," etc., are the "cauls" of Isaiah 3:18, [margin], which God has threatened to take away in the day of His anger.

Point 7. We hold that in the matter of shaving and coloring the beard, some of our brethren display a species of vanity equally censurable with that of certain of the sisters in dressing the hair; and that in all cases should they discard every style which will betoken the air of the fop; but while we have no objections to a growth of beard on all parts of the face, as nature designed it, yet where any portion of the beard is removed, we think the brethren greatly err from the sobriety of the Christian in donning the moustache or goatee.

Point 8. We believe that the extreme fashions of the present day in bonnets and hats, for females, are not to be countenanced; but that the main object to be kept in view in obtaining wearing apparel for the head is COVERING AND PROTECTION.

Point 9. HOOPS.- We believe that "hoops are a shame," [Spir. Gifts, Vol 4, p. 68], meaning by hoops anything of the kind, by which from its size, or the nature of the material, the form of the wearer is liable to be immodestly exposed. See Ex. 20:26.

Point 10. COSTLY APPAREL. - We believe that Paul by the expression, "costly array," [I Tim. 2:9], condemns the obtaining of the most costly material for garments, either for males or females, although it may be unexceptionable in other respects.

Point 11. NEW FASHIONS. - We believe that the people of God should be slow to adopt new fashions, of whatever sort they may be; for if not useful, we ought never to adopt them; if they are, it will be time enough for us to take them after they have been tested, and the excitement of their introduction has passed away; and having once found



that which is neat, modest,<sup>56</sup> and convenient, let us be slow to change. See Titus 2:14.

This "slowness to adopt new fashion," however, was all but ignored by Ellen White who at this same time was being influenced by various health reformers to experiment with the American costume. In 1867, she publicly reversed her former position and declared, "God would now have his people adopt the reform dress."<sup>57</sup> Although she insisted that the woman's skirt should be worn longer than the American costume, so as to cover more of the pants for the sake of modesty, her new position was seen as a direct contradiction of her previous statements, and raised a number of questions about the reliability of her inspiration. In spite of various appeals and articles in church papers,<sup>58</sup> the reform dress was generally rejected by Adventist women, and the credibility of Ellen White was definitely challenged by those who believed that she had personally dictated its adoption

---

<sup>56</sup> "Resolutions on Dress," Review and Herald (May 8, 1866) 180.

<sup>57</sup> Ellen White, Testimonies (1867 statement on "The Reform Dress") I, 525.

<sup>58</sup> See Ellen White, "The Dress Reform: An Appeal to the People in its Behalf," Review And Herald (April 14, 1868) 278; "Dress Reform Convention," Review and Herald (March 5, 1872) 93; "The Reform Dress," Health Reformer 7 (May 1872), 154-156.

without authority from God.<sup>59</sup> This lack of response from the women of the church deeply distressed Ellen. Even her own niece called the reform dress a "woman disfigurer." There were many who did not object to the shorter dress, which hung above the ankle, but the pants underneath were considered by most to be unattractive and embarrassing. Mrs. White found such a position morally inconsistent. She wondered how any could object to the reform dress in the name of modesty, who were willing to expose their naked ankles without even a blush.<sup>60</sup>

The question of female modesty had troubled Ellen White for many years. Like many reformers in the nineteenth century she placed a strong burden on women not to arouse the "animal passions" of men, even if they happened to be their husbands. In her opinion it was the responsibility of the "God fearing young woman" to behave, speak, and dress in such a manner that no man could be tempted to think impurely about her. In an 1870 article entitled, "female modesty" she counseled against the "jesting, joking, and laughing indulged in by women professing godliness," and argued that "sisters should not be forward, talkative, and bold, but

---

<sup>59</sup> Ellen White, Manuscript 167, 1897 and Ellen White to V.H. Haughey, July 4, 1897 (H-19, 1897) Ellen White Estate. These documents contain Ellen's personal reflection concerning the opposition she faced during the 1870's.

<sup>60</sup> Ellen White, "The Dress Reform," Health Reformer Vol. 7 (May 1872) 154-156.

modest and slow to speak." By thinking and talking about men they were helpless "against the sophistry of Satan" and unprepared to "withstand his seductive arts." The blame for sexual immorality was placed squarely upon the woman who had not properly prepared herself to "repulse" every inappropriate male advancement in any given situation.

If our sisters would feel the necessity of purifying their thoughts, and never suffer themselves to be careless in their deportment, which leads to improper acts, they would not be in danger of staining their purity. They would feel such an abhorrence of impure acts and deeds that they would not be found among the number who fall through the temptations of Satan, no matter who the medium might be whom Satan should select.<sup>61</sup>

In many cases, questions of modesty and health were interrelated by Ellen White. Women were not to wear vain "breast paddings" or padded bras, "to give the appearance of well developed breasts," because "these appendages attract the blood to the chest obstructing the natural circulation and making healthy development impossible."<sup>62</sup> Other Adventist writers joined Ellen White in the pages of the Health Reformer condemning everything from "hats, which caused baldness" to butles, perfumes, hair-dyes, cosmetics,

---

<sup>61</sup> Ellen White, "Female Modesty," in her A Solemn Appeal 149; see also 147-157.

<sup>62</sup> Ellen White, "Words to Christian Mothers," Health Reformer 6:1 (1871) 90.

and all forms of jewelry, wigs and hairpieces.<sup>63</sup> Although Mrs. White gave up her crusade to institute the reform dress among Adventist women after 1875 when it became obvious that pursuing it further would threaten her prophetic position, Adventist women did generally observe the other forms of modesty and simplicity that the prophetess recommended. The rationale employed to support many of these views came from the "science of phrenology" which enjoyed great popularity among most reformers of the day. For example, Ellen White drew on phrenological theory which believed that the "animal organs" of the head could be found at the base of the brain to condemn hairpieces.

The artificial hair and pads covering the base of the brain, heat and excite the spinal nerves centering in the brain. The head should ever be kept cool. The heat caused by these artificials induces the blood to the brain. The action of the blood upon the lower or animal organs of the brain, causes unnatural activity, tends to recklessness in morals and the mind and heart is in danger of being corrupted. As the animal organs are excited and strengthened, the morals are enfeebled. The moral and intellectual powers of the mind become servants to the animal . . . Many have lost their reason and become hopelessly insane, by following this deforming fashion.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> See "Head Dress," Health Reformer 12:1 (1877) 72; "Bustles," Health Reformer 12:1 (1877) 90; "perfumes," HR 6:1 (1871) 152; "Evils of Hair Dyes and Cosmetics," 6:1 (1871) 123; "Reasons Why I Wear Plainclothes," HR 9:1 (1874) 10.

<sup>64</sup> Ellen White, "Words To Christian Mothers," part 2, Health Reformer 6 (October 1871) 121.

Like William Miller, George I. Butler, and other prominent figures in Adventist History, Ellen White subjected herself, and her family, to phrenological examinations and considered it to be scientifically credible, though vulnerable to misuse.<sup>65</sup> This belief along with some of the other positions relating to sexuality and modesty which have already been discussed, help to explain why nineteenth century women were the target of many counsels which would not necessarily have direct application today.

#### ADVENTIST WOMEN AND "SOCIAL PURITY" IN THE KELLOGG ERA

Several years ago, when Hugh Hefner published a fifteen page article on the sexual views of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, he concluded that the "good doctor" was "anti-women" and "anti-sex," like the sick puritanical society he represented.<sup>66</sup> A quick perusal of Dr. Kellogg's works on sex would certainly convince the modern reader unfamiliar with victorian thought, that such a conclusion is valid. Kellogg, like Ellen White and most other Adventists of the day, subscribed to a world view, and fell victim to a false reliance on asumed "scientific facts," that from our

---

<sup>65</sup> Kennon, 138 ff; and Numbers, 149, 150.

<sup>66</sup> Hugh Hefner, "The Playboy Philosophy," Playboy 11 (July 1964) 29-39, 111-115.

perspective today degraded women and distorted the positive nature of human sexuality. But when one closely examines the presuppositions that existed behind these views, they are not generally motivated by an intentional sexism or deliberate antagonism towards the gift of sexuality. Even in the case of Kellogg, his very negative statements regarding sex can be generally traced to theories that are considered invalid today.

Although Kellogg authored more than 50 books during his 91 year life-span, there are only three that stand out in their relevance for this study. The first and most influential work was the bestselling Plain Facts For Old and Young (1877). Another huge volume, which was written directly for women, was entitled, Ladies Guide in Health and Disease: Girlhood, Maidenhood, Wifehood, Motherhood (1891). Finally, a smaller book by the title of, Social Purity (1892), which included a 21 page essay by his wife directed specifically at young women, also contributes to our understanding of how victorian attitudes on sexuality affected Adventist women.

In comparing Kellogg's views on sex and social purity to those of Ellen White, there are both differences and similarities that need to be acknowledged. In terms of their differences, Kellogg was much more vocal in his criticisms of male attitudes which served to degrade women,

and on occasion openly advocated sexual equality and equal rights for women.<sup>67</sup> However, he had a strong dislike for the reform dress and never supported Ellen White in her attempt to implement it. Another contrast between Mrs. White and Kellogg concerned his more extreme views of diet and sex, and sexual pleasure. Unlike the prophetess, Kellogg was quite fanatical in his dietary views and believed that sex should be confined to procreative purposes. Finally, the doctor differed from the prophetess in his source of authority. While he claimed an expertise in the "latest scientific knowledge" of the day, she claimed to receive her information from God. But in spite of those differences they were both strongly influenced by victorian thought. Both advocated vitalism, and theories related to phrenology - though Kellogg was certainly more sophisticated in his understanding of these areas, and both strongly condemned masturbation and all forms of "sexual excess." Finally, both were guilty of being extremely dogmatic on sexual topics about which they were apparently quite naive. The remainder of the chapter will briefly consider Kelloggs influence on Adventism in these areas between 1880 and 1925.

When men like Anthony Comstock and Josiah Leeds

---

<sup>67</sup> Although Kellogg gave strong lip service to equal rights for women, his overall views would not generally be described as feminist in nature, see Social Purity (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1892) 55-57.

launched their "social purity" crusades, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they were looking for men like John Harvey Kellogg to jump on their bandwagons. Kellogg was more "socially minded" in his reform consciousness than most Adventists. Not only did he strongly condemn the evils related to "personal ethics" such as drinking, smoking, dancing, theater, novel reading, etc., which was typical in Adventist circles, but he also took a greater interest in combating pornography, abortion, "indecent" public art, wife abuse, and various other "urban evils" which were more directly connected with "social ethics."<sup>68</sup> He actively promoted "purity pledges" for both young men and young women, severely criticizing the mentality which expected only young ladies to be pure. This "false double standard" was extremely destructive because it failed to demand "unblemished purity" from men. Yet, in spite of this position, Kellogg still focused on female immodesty as the primary cause of degenerating morality.<sup>69</sup>

Unlike most Adventist books of the day, Kellogg's works had wide appeal outside of the denomination. His small volume on social purity was considered to be one of the best books available on the subject, and his best selling Plain

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 6-42, 54ff.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 24, 27, 57.



Facts brought him national prominence.<sup>70</sup> It is this work which best demonstrates the contextual gap between victorian and modern America, and best illustrates the many popular myths concerning female sexuality which flourished inside and outside the Adventist community. Like Ellen White and most victorian Americans, Kellogg placed a great deal of emphasis on the biological differences which separated the sexes. Aside from the obvious physical differences, which allegedly left women less graceful, less coordinated, and less capable of walking or running long distances, Kellogg argued that male and female brains were created to excel in differing spheres,<sup>71</sup> which served to reinforce Adventism's belief in separate domestic spheres for women.

Kellogg also encouraged Adventism's commitment to ruralism, by identifying urban life with the dangers of pre-mature puberty. The onset of puberty in young women could be accelerated by as much as two years from the influences of "parties, balls, theaters, competition in school, and the various other causes of excitement in city life." In addition to this, dietary stimulants such as

---

<sup>70</sup> The general reception given these books is described in Health Reformer 12:1, (1877) 63, 216; and Review and Herald (January 3, 1893) under the title "social purity."

<sup>71</sup> J. H. Kellogg, Plain Facts For Old and Young (Battle Creek, MI: Health Library Assoc., 1901 Edition) 47, 49.

meat, coffee, spices, etc. were also responsible for premature puberty. However, it is the horrors that accompany early puberty, particularly for women, which concerned the doctor most.

Females in whom puberty occurs at the age of ten or twelve, by the time their age is doubled, are shriveled and wrinkled with age. At the time when they should be in their prime of health and beauty, they are prematurely old and broken. Those women who mature late, retain their beauty and their strength many years after their precocious sisters have become old, decrepit, and broken down.<sup>72</sup>

Another peculiarity of female puberty according to Kellogg was that it occurred significantly "earlier in brunettes than in blonds," a "fact" which modern medicine has also failed to confirm. In contrast to Freud, his contemporary, he also argued that the normal child should experience total sexual dormancy before puberty.

On the subject of chastity, Kellogg warns that "daydreams" and "mental unchastity" are just as harmful as the worst "concupiscence," leading to "debility and effeminacy" and reducing a person to the level of the "veriest debauchee." Sensual thoughts about the opposite sex are referred to as "leprosy" and "pestilence," and are to be avoided at all costs. A leading cause of sexual excitement in both males and females, according to the

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 85; see also 81-85, 112.

doctor, is "constipation."<sup>73</sup> The American practices of dating, courtship, and flirtation are also pronounced as "dangerous" in that they lead to "all manner of sexual excesses." Kellogg recommended the "old world traditions of keeping the sexes apart until they are ready for marriage." He also believed that "the greater share of the guilt of flirtation lies at the door of the female sex," a "fact" which could be traced to the reading of "pernicious novels" by "young girls." Such reading led to "precocious sexuality" which he defined as "any interest in sex, whatever, prior to puberty," and generally destroyed a person for life. The "only cure" for "sensuality" at any age, according to Kellogg, was "prevention."<sup>74</sup>

Even after marriage, sexual interests and desires were considered by Kellogg and many of his victorian contemporaries, to be a form of depravity inspired by Satan. Again, these views were not so much the product of an anti-sex bias as they were the result of unfortunate misconceptions concerning physiology. Kellogg warned against early marriage not for the sound psycho-social reasons which seem valid to us today, but because he believed that it would cause great physical harm to indulge in sex before the body had been fully prepared for the

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 170-173, 194,195.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 124-134.

trauma of sexual intercourse.

Physiology fixes with accuracy the earliest period at which marriage is admissible. This period is that at which the body attains complete development, which is not before 20 in the female, and 24 in the male. Even though the growth may be completed before these ages, ossification of the bones is not fully effected, so that development is incomplete.<sup>75</sup>

Kellogg, goes on to explain why the "reproductive act" is so harmful before ossification of the bones. Because this act is the "most exhaustive of all vital acts," its effect is to retard, weaken, and "dwarf the intellect." The doctor points out that these harmful effects are "even worse" for the female, who then passes on her weakness to her progeny greatly increasing the chances that they will be born as dwarfs, cretins, monsters, or mongolian idiots.

Not only is "premature sex" tragic in its results, for Kellogg, but sexual excess, defined as "sex for anything but reproduction" is also devastating in its consequences. The only appropriate time for sexual union was "on or about the 14th day" of the woman's 28 day cycle, which he believed, was the only time that "desire for sexual congress naturally exists in the female." To violate nature's laws by indulging beyond this was not only considered to be "beastly," but led to what the doctor called, "legalized murder." "If husbands are great sufferers, as we have seen,

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 117, see also, 117-123, 99-101, 342-344.

wives suffer still more terribly," states Kellogg, "being of feeblar constitution, and hence less able to bear the frequent shock which is suffered by the nervous system."<sup>76</sup> In addition to this he denounces sex during pregnancy as "especially dangerous" because it destroys the mother's vitality, produces disease, creates sex inclined infants (a "fact" which he believed helped to explain the tremendous rise in prostitution), and lays a predisposition for epilepsy. Sex during menstruation is simply dismissed as "unthinkably loathsome and a heinous violation of nature's laws." For women sexual intercourse is said to be as harmful after menopause (about the age of 45) as it is before bone ossilation is complete, causing "premature decay, disease," and "degeneration."<sup>77</sup>

Kellogg condemns all forms of nonprocreative sex play, unnatural birth control, and abortion, but like Ellen White, saves his strongest censure for the "damning" sin of "solitary vice." Nearly half of Plain Facts is devoted to this "despicable" subject, and a large section of The Ladies Guide also focuses on how this tragic practice is particularly destructive for females. Kellogg believed that it was "much more difficult to cure this soul-destroying

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 88-96, 70, 73, 440ff.

vice in girls than in boys,"<sup>78</sup> but recommended that both male and female children could be restrained from practicing masturbation by "bandaging the parts," "tying the hands," or "covering the organs with a cage." He then goes on to relate a host of horror stories concerning young women who indulged in this "vicious and pernicious habit," but fortunately protected the anonymity of his clients, a practice which Ellen White did not always observe in her sex oriented testimonies.<sup>79</sup> Kellogg also condemns "nocturnal emissions" in males and "nocturnal ejaculation" in females due to the "fact" that "dreams can be controlled," and recommends such drastic measures as "frequent nighttime raids," and for boys "circumcision without anesthesia" to prevent the sexual evils of the night.

Between the years 1877 and 1925 Dr. John Harvey Kellogg was far and away the authority in Adventism on the subject of human sexuality, and was considered to be one of the most highly respected experts on this subject by thousands outside of Adventism who followed the advice of his best selling book. While there are a scattering of articles by other authors which broach the subject of sex in Adventist

---

<sup>78</sup> J. H. Kellogg, Ladies Guide in Health and Disease (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1891) 165, see also 149-170; and Plain Facts pp. 290ff.

<sup>79</sup> Kellogg, Plain Facts, 267, 268, 592; and Numbers, 158, 159.

periodicals during this period, particularly with regard to modesty and dress,<sup>80</sup> no one comes close to riveling or challenging the "expertise" of Kellogg in this field. Even Ellen White who shared many of the Doctor's views, did not attempt to disagree with or contradict the teachings of Kellogg.

The general beliefs concerning victorian sexuality which have been discussed in this chapter demonstrate to a degree why women were the recipients of many stereotypes which accentuated, and at times grossly exaggerated, the differences between the sexes. The warnings presented to Adventist women by both Ellen White and Kellogg were not considered to be unusual in the context of victorian

---

<sup>80</sup> For a sampling of the kind of articles which appear during this period relating to sexuality see, "sold" Review and Herald 59 (June 13, 1882) 376; G. I. Butler, "The Short Dress Objection," Review and Herald 60 (August 14, 1883) 9, 10; "Apparel of Women," Review and Herald (July 6, 1886) 427; Ellen White, "The Sin of Licentiousness," R&H 64 (May 17, 1887) 137 ff; Mrs. S. V. Sutherland, "School Dresses," R&H 74 (August 17, 1897) 33; "Women Losing Their Modesty," R&H (December 3, 1901) 783; "The Relation of Young Men and Women in Our Schools," Atlantic Union Gleaner 2:1 (1903) 57; "An Appeal To Women," Signs of the Times 30 (1904) 47; "Worldliness in Dress," Lake Union Herald 5:7 (February 19, 1913); John Quinn, Dress and Demoralization 8 (1916) 35, 36; "Wearing Ornaments," Review and Herald 97 (January 1, 1920) 1 ff; See also the following secondary sources, Delmer Davis, "Hotbed of Immorality," Adventist Heritage 7 (Springs, 1982) 20 ff; and Manuel O'Neil, "Letters From a Healdsburg College Students," Adventist Heritage 3 (Winter, 1976) 51-57.

America. This fact alone should cause those of us who are Adventists, to be extremely careful about arbitrarily or rigidly applying the statements of Ellen White concerning women to other aspects of life, be it domesticity, urban evils, or the topics of socio-political involvement, church leadership, or biblical interpretation, which we will turn our attention to in the remaining two chapters.



## CHAPTER FOUR

FEMINISM, ADVENTIST WOMEN, AND  
SOCIO-POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

"If woman suffrage or any other suffrage would have greatly helped the accomplishment of this object [the divine purpose], no doubt God would have given us directions concerning it in his word. But he has not. . . if Christians were filled with the Spirit of their master, and were anxiously desirous to do His will, and consecrate their lives to the salvation of lost souls, they would not be troubled by the questions of woman suffrage. To our mind, it will prove of no benefit to the world, and will be an injury to society."

Signs of the Times - 1895

"Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of women's rights. . . might as well sever all connections with the third angel's message."

Ellen White, 1864

Adventism, throughout its history, has generally displayed an attitude of distrust and non-participation towards politics, and a detachment from socio-political movements. In the words of Jonathan Butler, a noted church historian,

Adventists passed through several phases in relating to the Republic. First, in the Millerite Adventism of the early 1840s, they espoused an apolitical apocalyptic that shunned any relation to government, doomed as it was to an imminent end. Second, in the post-Millerite Sabbath-keeping Adventism from the mid-1840s to the mid-1870s, they moved from the withdrawn, apolitical position of the Millerites to a political Apocalyptic which expressed their

doomful denunciation of the Republic in the language of contemporary politics. Third, in the Seventh-day Adventism of the 1880s and after, they embraced a political prophetic which brought them into the political process, if only marginally, and engaged them as prophets to sustain the Republic, at least for a time, rather than merely to forecast its ruin as apocalyptists.<sup>1</sup>

The impulse towards social reform which characterized the post-Millennial optimism of nineteenth century American religion has been well documented by a number of social historians.<sup>2</sup> Adventists, on the other hand, were a pre-Millennial movement, which maintained a pessimistic attitude towards the ultimate potential of social reform, even when they became involved in working with such reform movements. The church aligned itself with a number of Abolitionist and prohibitionist groups<sup>3</sup> in the 1860's and 1870's and worked particularly close with the Women's Temperance League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union

---

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Butler, "Adventism and the American Experience," in Edwin Ganstad (ed.) The Rise of Adventism (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) 174.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Smith, "Social Reform", in Ganstad, 18-29. See also, H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America; Ernest Tuveson, Redeemer Nation; Martin Marty, The Righteous Empire (New York: Dial Press, 1970)

<sup>3</sup> Two excellent sources which give detailed information concerning Adventist involvement with reform movements are: Yvonne Anderson, "The Bible, the Bottle and the Ballot", Adventist Heritage 7:2 (Fall 1982) 38-52; Charles Teel, Bridegroom or Babylon? Dragon or Lamb? Adventists and Nineteenth-Century Reform Movements (unpublished manuscript: Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library, 1983).

in Battle Creek. Ellen White even became a well known temperance speaker during this period, but Adventist view on feminism, on the Sabbath, and labour unions would eventually drive a wedge between themselves and these groups. The high point in Adventist political activism came in 1882 when an Adventist minister, William Gage, was actually elected mayor of Battle Creek in spite of the fact that many Adventists refused to vote because they considered it to be an immoral act. Later the same year when Ellen White launched a scathing rebuke against Gage for his political involvement and denounced him as one "wholly unfit to engage in the work of God", political activism was permanently stigmatized in the church.<sup>4</sup>

When one understands the suspicion and contempt which Adventists held for the political activism that characterized most social reform movements in the nineteenth century, as well as the idealized rural role which Adventists attempted to preserve for women, it is not surprising that Ellen White, and Adventists in general, opposed the Feminist Movement of the nineteenth century along with such specific groups as the National American

---

<sup>4</sup> Ellen White, Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church, (November 30, 1882).

Women Suffrage Association, and the Women's Trade Union League.<sup>5</sup> Such attitudes, in the early stages of the Adventist movement, have continued to affect the church in the present. This chapter will first discuss general protestant involvement in socio-political concerns in Victorian America, with particular consideration given to feminism, and then turn to Adventism's relationship to these issues.

#### FEMINISM AND POLITICS IN "PROTESTANT AMERICA"

The century long struggle for women's suffrage in America, which gained momentum in the 1840's and culminated with the passage of the nineteenth amendment in 1920, opened many new doors for female involvement in the political process, and strongly influenced a number of women's organizations connected with missions, labor, temperance and other social reforms. This movement also permanently affected male-female relationships in a way that provoked a wide range of reactions from both men and women. The woman's rights movements of the nineteenth century was to a degree rooted in the philosophy of Mary Wallstonecraft, whose classic work, Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792), provided an inspired vision of how equalitarian and

---

<sup>5</sup> For detailed information of these women's organizations, see Jean Friedman and William Shade, eds., Our American Sisters (Toronto: Heath, 1982) 372-456.

egalitarian practices could transform society. Though denounced by many New England protestants as the "godless" opinion of one who had adopted the ideas of the French Revolution, the seed of Wallstonecraft's vision could not be totally lost for American women. After 1835 the conventional views of "woman's sphere" were challenged in the circles of Quakerism, Unitarianism, Radical Sectarianism and by some who had partially or completely disengaged themselves from evangelical protestantism.<sup>6</sup> When abolitionists Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton met in 1840, at an anti-slavery convention in London, their common feminist concerns led them to plan for a conference to be held back in the United States, which would address the grievances of women. Due to the demands of their respective schedules the conference did not come off until 1848 when Stanton, who was raised a Presbyterian, met with Mott, Martha Wright, Jane Hunt, and Mary McClintock (all Quakers) to organize the Seneca Falls Conference.

This historic conference which was attended by 200 women and 40 men took place only one week later on July 19 and 20. Stanton's husband, Henry, who was a leading abolitionist, found himself so upset over his wife's involvement in the new movement that he refused to attend

---

<sup>6</sup> Nancy Cott, Bonds of Womanhood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) 204.

the meetings, leaving town until they were completed. But in spite of his objections, and much to his chagrin, it was Elizabeth who emerged as the most outspoken advocate of woman's rights at the conference. Not only did she deliver an emotional speech that protested the unequal treatment which women suffered in terms of education, employment, wages, and legal rights, but she and Frederick Douglass stood alone in their insistence that woman's suffrage be included in the platform, or "declaration of principles," which they drafted. She demanded the vote because she saw it providing an essential opportunity for women "to retrieve the errors of the past and renew the elements of democracy."<sup>7</sup> The "womanifesto" that was created at the Seneca Falls was certainly a challenge to traditional ideas and social customs, relating to womanhood. Yet, had it not been for the extreme reaction which was registered against the conference by the national press, it would never have received such tremendous public attention.

In the early 1850's Stanton and her fellow feminists were attacked and ridiculed by a host of major newspapers. They were labeled as a "hybrid species, half man and half woman, belonging to neither sex." The New York Herald

---

<sup>7</sup> Lois Banner, Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Radical For Woman's Rights (Boston: Little Brown, 1980) 97, 39-47; and Catherine Clinton, The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Hill and Mary, 1984) 73-76.

called them, "mannish women, like hens that crow," and denounced their husbands as "hen-pecked" men who were fit to "wear petticoats." Other papers including the Albany Register, and New York Tribune, described feminists as "unsexed women" who were "entirely devoid of personal attractions," and "strong-minded," "bloomerites" who made a "scoff of religion". They were considered to be so obnoxious, dangerous, and defiant that they would repulse a normal man, and reduce any male foolish enough to marry them to "weak minded," "apron wearing," "lords" without "breeches." Others who felt even more threatened by the "feminist hysteria" spoke out in fear rather than ridicule. Stevenson Archer, addressing the House of Representatives several years after Seneca Falls, warned that the "wee fingernails" of the suffragettes had "grown to tearing talons capable of throwing man on his back." They were a "monstrous army," a "whirlwind in petticoats." Feminists were called "castraters," "vampires," and "mistakes of nature." One French doctor, named Edouard Toulouse, even went so far, in a book on the causes of insanity, as to claim that such "degenerate women" could be easily identified by their "low voices, hirsute bodies, and small breasts."<sup>8</sup> The war between the sexes was a much debated

---

<sup>8</sup> These statements are all documented by Peter Gay, The Bourgeois Experience (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) 190-194.

theme in the popular press during the last half of the nineteenth century. But, just as there were many women, particularly in evangelical circles (like Ellen White and her Adventist sisters), who opposed feminism, so there were a goodly number of men, like the forty in attendance at Seneca Falls, who supported the cause of sexual equality. Some of the most notable male advocates of woman's rights in the nineteenth century were men like William Lloyd Garrison, Dr. George Drysdale, Saint-Simon, Joseph Breuer, and John Stuart Mill just to name a few.<sup>9</sup> Mills' great feminist work, The Subjection of Women, is still the source of many quotes which address the issue of woman's liberation today.

Not only did individual men provide assertive support, but groups of male liberals, freemasons, and even evangelical Christians in some cases, joined together to promote the cause of sexual (human) equality. According to Alice Rossi, (The Feminist Papers), and Donald Dayton (Discovering an Evangelical Heritage), the roots of American feminism can, in many ways, be traced to the revivalism of Charles G. Finney, and the various reform movements to which it gave birth. Finney's recognition of women during the second great awakening certainly helped to lay the foundation for the woman's rights movement which followed.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 174-176, 189.



Dayton argues that next to Quakerism, evangelicalism "has given the greatest role to women in the life of the church." In addition to Finney, he names John Wesley, Adam Clarke, Theodore Weld, Asa Mahan, Jonathan Blanchard, B.T. Roberts, W.A. Sellew, A.J. Gordon, and Frederick Franson as examples of prominent evangelical male leaders who joined their female counterparts in advocating greater freedom and rights for women.<sup>10</sup> To speak of a war between the sexes, is no more accurate in reference to the nineteenth century, than it would be today. However, there were extremely radical feminists like Gage who served a necessary function in their condemnation of the status quo, but also managed to alienate the vast majority of the populace by openly proclaiming their feelings of hostility against male domination. But, these women were not as common as the reactionary misogynists who saw the woman's rights movement as the root of all evil, and condemned it with apocalyptic fervor.

In addition to Stanton, who became one of the most outspoken critics of patriarchy and male-dominated religion in her later years, there were others who expressed such strong anti-clericalism, and anti-male sentiment, that they

---

<sup>10</sup> See Alice Ross, The Feminist Papers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974) part 2; Donald Dayton, Discovering An Evangelical Heritage (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) 85-93; and Beverly Harrison, "The Early Feminists and the Clergy: A case study in the dynamics of secularization," Review and Expositor (Winter 1975) 46.

managed to alienate the majority of their fellow feminists. Matilda Joslyn Gage was one such woman. Her anger and bitterness against male domination gained her the reputation of being a "man-hater." When she was reminded that there were many "respectable" gentlemen in the world, her retort was, "respectable men see prostitutes and molest young girls." But, her strongest resentment was felt against the patriarchal Christian church. In 1893, she wrote,

It is through the perversion of the religious element in woman, cultivating the emotions at the expense of her reason, playing upon her hopes and fears of the future, holding this life with all its high duties forever in abeyance to that which is to come, that she and the children she has trained, have been so completely subjugated by priest-craft and superstition.<sup>11</sup>

Three years earlier Stanton had expressed similar sentiments when she denounced the notion that God was masculine. She accused the church of creating an "exclusively male God" in a religion, "sustained mainly by women," but, controlled completely by men. She sought to remedy these inequities through the publication of her controversial Woman's Bible, in 1895. It rejected the idea that scripture was "divinely inspired," and attempted to expose the "masculine bias" in the book which she believed, more than any other document, taught the "subjection and

---

<sup>11</sup> Matilda Gage, Woman, Church and State, (Watertwon, MA: Persephone Press, 1980 reprint from 1893) XXIX, see also XXV-XXX.

degradation of woman."<sup>12</sup> Adventists, like other strict advocates of verbal or plenory inspiration believed such a volume was scandalous and satanic. However, such conservative christians opposed suffrage not only because some feminists objected to the divine inspiration of scripture, but because they generally agreed with the following views concerning suffrage that were printed in one evangelical journal.<sup>13</sup>

What woman's suffrage will not do

1. "It will not remove economic ills." The laws of supply and demand will determine woman's wages - not the vote.
2. "It will not secure better treatment for women." The mistreatment of women in American society is due to our nation's repudiation of its christian moral heritage and cannot be remedied by "any particular form of administration of the state."
3. "It will not help the community politically." The present effort to "purify politics" is prevented by ignorant voters" and "corrupt managers." Female suffrage would only "add greatly to the number of ignorant voters."
4. "It will not help women individually." It will "create unanticipated evils" and detract from her ability to "care for the home" and pursue the "womanly life."

---

<sup>12</sup> Banner, 163, see also 58-63 and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Woman's Bible (Seattle: Coalition Task Force on Women, 1974, 1983 Reprint from 1895).

<sup>13</sup> Henry Stimson, "Is woman's suffrage an enlightened and justifiable policy for the state," The Bibliotheca Sacra 67 (april 1910) 338-346.

What Woman Suffrage will Do

1. "It will draw women out of their homes and expose them in the very necessities of public life to forms of temptations for which they are little prepared."
2. "It will greatly increase the ignorant and usable proletariat."
3. "It will introduce new elements of evil into corrupt politics, because women are women and not men."
4. "It will cost women the loss of much of the personal influence which they now possess."
5. "It will add a new excitement to lives already greatly overexcited, especially in the cities."
6. "It will divert the attention of the women from the agencies for good which are now within their reach."
7. "It introduces a terrible risk into the life of the state because, once given, it is unalterable."

Such views were typical of conservative christians who generally had great fears concerning the movement to win voting privileges for women. Adventists certainly were not alone in their opposition to woman's suffrage, and many feminists who were conscious of this christian reaction cringed when they heard the churches attacked by their fellow suffragettes.

Both Stanton and Gage were opposed by, and to a degree ostracized from the mainline suffrage movement because of their more radical views. Even the close friendship between Susan B. Anthony and Stanton was strained by the latters

tendency to attack organized religion, and voice her grievances against men in rather generalized terms. For Anthony, and the younger generation of feminists who emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century, the one issue which transcended all others was obtaining the vote for women. When Stanton had invited Anthony to join her Woman's Bible Committee, Anthony answered,

No - I don't want my name on that Bible Committee - you fight that battle - and leave me to fight the secular - the political fellows...! I Simply don't want the enemy to be diverted from my practical ballot fight - to that of scoring me for belief one way or the other about the Bible.

Later, after Stanton had proceeded without her and published the book in spite of the storm of protest and denunciation that it invoked, Anthony sent her friend a mild rebuke. "You ought to stop hitting poor old St. Paul," she wrote in 1898, "I do wish you could center your big brain on the crimes we, ourselves, as people are responsible for - to charge our offenses to false books or false interpretations - is but a way of seeking a 'refuge of lies'."<sup>14</sup> This disagreement over strategy, like others which had split

---

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Aileen Raditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) 78, 79.

feminists into separate suffrage organizations before,<sup>15</sup> was never resolved. Though Anthony made every effort to save the 81 year old, "honorary" president of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association the embarrassment of having her work (*The Woman's Bible*) repudiated at the organization's 1896 convention, the vote went against Mrs. Stanton 53 to 41.<sup>16</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, suffrage leadership in America tended to follow one of the two broad categories. Individuals like Stanton, Gage, Charlotte Gilman and Jane Addams seemed to have a "wide angle" vision in their view of the oppressions that faced women, and refused to fight the feminist battle on only one front - namely suffrage. They attacked the church, patriarchal theology, and certainly provoked the "righteous indignation" of conservative christians such as Adventists. They tended to view the ballot as only a means to an end, the end being total equality for women. Other feminists such as Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, Ida Harper, Nettie Schuler, and most of the suffrage leaders after 1900, viewed the ballot as the crucial issue, and fought for suffrage in the political

---

<sup>15</sup> For information concerning how the earlier conflicts between Stanton and Anthony vs. American Woman Suffrage Association differed from each other, see Ellen Dubois, Feminism and Suffrage (Cornell University Press, 1978) 99ff, 164ff.

<sup>16</sup> Kraditor, 83-85.

arena with almost a "tunnel vision", which caused them to shy away from theological or ecclesiastical arguments. They believed that religious controversy could only hurt their cause, therefore, they actively sought the support of the churches.<sup>17</sup> There were, of course, some women who did not fit neatly into either camp like Ana Shaw,<sup>18</sup> and Mrs. O.H.P. Belmont. Belmont was the president of the National Woman's party after suffrage passed in 1920, but unlike most feminists who "buried the hatchet" once their goal was realized, she drew the wrath of churchmen by proclaiming the dawning of a new age of female dictatorship.

Henceforth women are to be dictators. The end of the dictatorship of the world by men is in sight. We women have lived long enough in the cramped confinement of a misfit social structure. We have been forced to sit still too long. We have been powerless for such an endless time that we have enough stored up energy to shape any

---

<sup>17</sup> For further information on how the feminist movement and woman's suffrage was affected by the interplay between politics and religion see, Sally Wagner, "Introduction," in Gage XV-XXXIX; Carrie Catt and Nettie Schuler, Woman Suffrage and Politics (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1923, 1926, 1970); and Mary Pellaver, "The Religious Thought of Three United States Suffrage Leaders" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, December 1980). Microfilm at School of Theology at Claremont library. Berg, makes a careful distinction between Feminism and Woman's rights on the nineteenth century, Barbara Baerg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Ross, 2246ff, Contrasts "enlightenment feminists" with American "moral crusader feminists" but in this author's opinion both of these distinctions are overstated.

<sup>18</sup> For a comparison of Anna Shaw's views with the positions of Stanton and Anthony, see Pellaner.

structure to our will. The time has come to take this world muddle that men have created and turn it into an orderly, peaceful, happy abiding place for humanity. In its present condition the world is its own worst indictment against the dictatorship of men one-half of the human race. They have always worked for themselves. That is not sufficient. The error lies here. Men have always kept women in subjection... But now we propose to destroy these pedestals of egotistical man. Men have insisted not only that we live in a man-governed world but also that we worship in a man-dominated church; we no longer accept this... The day is not far off when the woman's party, of which I am president, will be strong enough to impose any measure it may choose. We mean to plant the idea of independence in the mind of every woman. Our party will be a woman's party, and only a woman's party. It will have no members<sup>19</sup>, no officers, no employees who are not women.

This vengeful declaration of Independence, though not typical of feminist attitudes after the nineteenth Amendment or before, was the kind of document that inspired dire warnings from the churches and prompted many christians to react even more strongly against the cause of women's rights. This was particularly true among very conservative Christians such as Adventists.

---

<sup>19</sup> These statements were printed and attacked in, "Woman's Rights and Duties," The Christian Century (1923) 923; for examples of other non-adventist conservative christian periodicals that objected the suffrage and the woman's right movement see, "Woman's Rights", Millennial Harbinger 4:4 (April 1954) 203-207; "The Wrong and Peril of Woman Suffrage," reviewed by James Buckley, Methodist Review (March, 1910) 333-335.



## ADVENTISM, FEMINISM, AND POLITICS

It would be a gross exaggeration to claim that Adventists generally, were anything more than apathetic and unconcerned about woman's suffrage, or the whole issue of woman's right, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, when the proposed nineteenth Amendment was being debated across America. The church was far too preoccupied with its own internal problems, many of which were related to the waning years and death of the prophetess (Ellen White died in 1915), to get involved in such a "secular," "political" dispute. Very little is mentioned in Adventist periodicals about woman's rights or suffrage, and the few articles that can be found during this period are either brief news clippings quoted from other magazines and newspapers, or derogatory references to feminism and suffrage which see these movements as simply additional, "satanically inspired" signs that the end of the world was near.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> See "Woman Suffrage a Success?", Review and Herald 72:36 (September 3, 1985) 565; "Do Women Want To Vote?," Review and Herald (November 13, 1900) 725; "Woman Suffrage Has Been Defeated in the East," Signs of the Times 8 (August 1916) 44; "When Religion Declines then Immorality Increases," Signs of the Times 12 (December 1920) 14.

One of the few articles that specifically addressed the question of woman's rights, and stated an editorial position on the subject appeared in 1895, as a response to a reader's inquiry.

If woman suffrage or any other suffrage would have greatly helped the accomplishment of this object [the divine purpose], no doubt God would have given us directions concerning it in His Word. But He has not. Our correspondent says, 'I do not believe us women need any more rights than the Lord gives us,' and those are just our sentiments... If Christians were filled with the Spirit of their Master, and were anxiously desirous to do His will, and consecrate their lives to the salvation of lost souls, they would not be troubled by the question of woman suffrage. To our mind, it will prove of no benefit to the world, and will be an injury to society.<sup>21</sup>

This statement seems to accurately represent the general tone of Adventist thinking concerning suffrage and feminism during the 30 years that followed. Previous to this statement, there were a number of articles in Adventist publications dealing with the question of suffrage in relationship to the involvement of Adventists in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) which will be considered later. But, it should be pointed out that Adventist's antagonistic opposition to the woman's right movement was a consistent position that characterized denominational thinking from the time the church was organized. In 1864,

---

<sup>21</sup> "Woman's Rights," Signs of the Times 21 (January 24, 1895) 51.

just one year after the S.D.A. General Conference Organization came into existence, Ellen White authoritatively established this viewpoint for Adventists when she stated that involvement in the woman's rights movement was antithetical to the cause of Adventism and true Christianity. As part of a "revealed testimony" that warned against both the reform dress and spiritualism as well, she declared, "I saw that God's order has been reversed, and His special directions disregarded, by those who adopt the American custome." She continued, "those who feel called to join the movement in favor of woman's rights and the so-called dress reform might as well sever all connection with the third angel's message [a synonym for Adventism]. The Spirit which attends the one cannot be in harmony with the other."<sup>22</sup> According to the prophetess, such a movement was wrong because it violated the sacred distinctions between male and female spheres, and led to participation in unwarranted political issues of the world.

Adventism's suspicion of socio-political involvement was directly linked to its premillennial theology, which had its roots in Millerite Apocalypticism. And while it is true that the Millerites were not as socially pessimistic, or isolated from socio-political issues, as they have been

---

<sup>22</sup> Ellen G. White, "The Cause in the East," Testimony 1864, in her Testimonies To the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948) I, 421.

accused of being,<sup>23</sup> it is also true that their climactic view of history did not allow for the optimistic belief that socio-political involvement could in any way transform the wicked world. While concerned about social justice, their focus was on the New Jerusalem, the only place where there would be "no more oppression, intemperance, licentiousness, profanity, Sabbath breaking, etc., of which our land and world is full."<sup>24</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists, who evolved out of this millerite heritage, demonstrated a similar paradox in their views of social reform, and political participation. On the one hand, Adventists were strong advocates of abolition, temperance, moral reform, health reform, and prohibition, yet on the other hand, they opposed labor reform, woman's rights and suffrage and sabbath reform movements, while denouncing the american nation as doomed to fall, and questioning whether it was morally right to vote and get involved in politics in any way. The church attempted to

---

<sup>23</sup> Two excellent papers which challenge the traditional arguments of scholars (such as E.T. Clark, David Rowe, etc.,) state that the Millerites were guilty of socio-political isolationism are, Wayne Judd, "Millerism and Social Reform: An Historical Paradox" (unpublished manuscript, Heritage Room Loma Linda University, (LSC) Library 1979); and Teel.

<sup>24</sup> Millerite Tract, The Midnight Cry, April 13, 1843.

resolve this apparent contradiction by making an arbitrary distinction between issues that were "obviously religious," and those that were supposedly just political. In a Review and Herald article entitled, "Politics," Adventists were told that in matters of religious principle,

Every Christian knows or should know which side he is on. He is with temperance and not intemperance; protestantism and not catholicism; freedom and not slavery; republicanism and not tyranny. These principles are essential elements of religion; and whoever is not sound on these, forfeits his claim to the title of christian.... To the question, why we do not with our votes and influence labor against the evil tendency of the times [a position that was later reversed more than once], we reply that our views of prophecy lead us to the conclusion that things will not be bettered. This country, if we are correct in believing it to be symbolized by the two-horned beast of Revelation, will finally sustain such an abominable character, that it will be landed in the lake of fire. We do not therefore feel it incumbent upon us to labor, in this respect, either to hasten or retard the fulfillment of prophecy. God's purposes will surely be accomplished.<sup>25</sup>

Six years after this statement was printed, Uriah Smith still editor of the Review, demonstrated just how non-political Adventists were by attacking president Lincoln, and comparing him to the pharoah of the Exodus,

---

<sup>25</sup> "Politics," Review and Herald (September 11, 1856) 152. Some other protestant churches had rather reserved attitudes towards politics as well, though not as extreme as Adventists, as the following articles reprinted from non- Adventist periodicals represent, see "Religion and Politics", Presbyterian Herald quoted in Review and Herald (October 2, 1856) 173; "A Word Concerning the Present Political Campaign," Sabbath Recorder quoted in Review and Herald (September 10, 1872) 101.

because his position on slavery was considered, by Smith, to be far too moderate. Smith refers to the president's policies as "conservative" and "suicidal,"<sup>26</sup> language that strikes one as being rather political when applied to the chief executive. The fact that various prominent Adventists actively participated in the "underground railroad," and that the prophetess herself advocated civil disobedience in the cause of abolition, also demonstrates that the Advent people did not always isolate themselves from political questions.

Political activism is even more obvious in Adventist history when one explores the churches participation in the long battle to pass prohibition. Up until 1859 most Adventists agreed with Joseph Clarke, that any attempt to change the fateful affairs of planet earth by getting involved in public politics was in direct contradiction with praying the Lord's prayer - "thy kingdom come".<sup>27</sup> But all this changed when a republican-passed law intended to control liquor traffic in Michigan was ruled unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court. This victory for liquor interests led to the formation of the Woman's

---

<sup>26</sup> Uriah Smith, editorial statement before, "Letter to the President," Review and Herald, 20 (September 23, 1862) 130.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Clarke 1857 statement, quoted in Yvonne Anderson, "The Bible, The Bottle and The Ballot," Adventist Heritage 7:2 (Fall 1982) 39.

Temperance League in Battle Creek, and forced Adventists (who had their headquarters in Battle Creek) to re-examine their political passivity, which was "helping the saloons to flourish". When "men of intemperance" actually approached Ellen White and not only complimented the "conscientious stand of Sabbath keepers" in not voting, but encouraged Adventists to continue in such a course "like the Quakers," the prophetess saw that "Satan and his angels" were behind such a position.<sup>28</sup>

In the wake of Ellen White's changed political posture, Adventist leadership reversed its position on voting in the 1860's claiming that the act was now "highly proper". In addition to voting, Adventists moved towards political activism in other ways. Due to the fact that women had not been granted suffrage in Michigan, their main channels of participation in the political process were petition circulation and platform speeches. Here Ellen White developed quite a reputation as a temperance lecturer. In the 1860's and '70's she was well known by Municipal officials in Battle Creek and even invited to speak at civic rallies by Mayor Austin. When Adventist believers in Iowa became embroiled in conflict over the issue of political participation, and appealed to Ellen White to mediate their

---

<sup>28</sup> Ellen White, Diary statements dated from January 1 to March 31, 1859, Ellen White Vault, Loma Linda University/La Sierra Campus.

differences, she related a "special vision" God gave her concerning their situation, and advised them even to "vote on the Sabbath day for prohibition if you cannot at any other time."<sup>29</sup> Such a position demonstrated the dramatic change that had occurred in Adventist thinking towards politics in two short decades.

Church periodicals attempted to explain this apparent turn about by developing a distinction between "acceptable politics" and unacceptable political involvement. In the 1870's a number of articles appeared in the Review and Herald, dealing with the positive and negative aspects of political participation. The "lamentable ignorance" of the masses was attacked in one article which argued that "the privilege of voting" should be restricted to men who "are educated" and "can intelligently use it." The "degraded" and "ignorant" voters, who were connected "principally to one party" (the democrats), were described as a "disgusting fungus" which needed to be "at once severed from the body politic." Such voters, who had the "intelligent countenance of a hippopotamus" were responsible for the "unmitigated filth and drunken obscenity" that revolted "better classes of citizens at the polls."<sup>30</sup> Not only did Adventists

---

<sup>29</sup> Ellen White, Letter 6, 1881, Ellen White Vault LLU/LSC.

<sup>30</sup> "Voting," Review and Herald 37 (March 14, 1871), 100.



favor elitism in suffrage, and generally voted republican, they now believed that they could take the "political high road," or become actively involved in combating corruption and fighting for "political purity" without becoming defiled by the evils of politics. Church members were told to avoid "the low common use of politics," by rejecting campaign enthusiasm, which attempted to elevate the "poor, puny man... to the pinnacle of power." They were to mingle in politics like the "prophet" of old by opposing Sunday legislation and liquor interests, but they were not to "meddle with politics" by seeking the office of the "modern politician" which was sure to bring "compromise and corruption."<sup>31</sup>

However, this momentum in favor of political activism, met with a deathly obstacle when the 1882 mayoral election in Battle Creek literally pulled Adventists into the political arena. The pro-temperance forces in Battle Creek, and throughout the state of Michigan, had been frustrated by the Republican party's hesitancy to fully embrace prohibitionist candidates. Therefore, their forces were often divided between the Republican and Prohibitionist parties, which weakened their power against the Democrats who were opposed to prohibition. In 1882, temperance

---

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Clarke, "Politics," Review and Herald 48 (December 14, 1876) 186; and George Butler, "Political Corruption," Review and Herald 41 (March 4, 1873) 92.

leaders in Battle Creek decided to choose their own candidate, rather than risking betrayal by Republican party leaders again. But when they selected Elder William Gage, an Adventist minister who had become a prominent temperance reformer, as the ideal candidate for the temperance ticket, the situation became rather embarrassing for Adventist church leadership.<sup>32</sup> At first Gage declined the offer as unthinkable, but when the party was unable to find any other candidate with the preacher's impressive credentials,

It appeared that to decline absolutely would be to jeopardize the interests of the temperance cause, he accepted, and the people ratified the nomination, giving him a plurality of one hundred and thirty-six over the higher of the two party candidates. The very best class of citizens supported him.<sup>33</sup>

This apologetic assurance, by the Review editor, that Gage was indeed justified in running included the only political endorsement ever issued to any candidate by the church paper. But, Smith's opinion on this matter was by no means representative of other Adventists, who found it scandalous that a minister would run for political office.

---

<sup>32</sup> For a detailed discussion of How Democrats, Republicans, and the Prohibitionist Party related to the question of temperance in Michigan during the 1880's see, Richard Jensen, The Winning of The Midwest (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 68-71; and Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture (New York: Free Press, 1970) 5-15, 123, 124.

<sup>33</sup> Uriah Smith, "The Temperance Cause in Battle Creek: An Explanation," Review and Herald (April 11, 1882) 232.

Most notably George Butler, the General Conference President, objected to Smith's endorsement of Gage. He also published his views in the Review listing every adventist argument against political activism that could be resurrected since the beginning of the Advent movement. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, who had actively campaigned against Gage's election in spite of his own strong temperance views, was accused by a local paper, The Nightly Moon of opposing the mayor out of petty jealousy. In addition to this controversy, Gage did not help his own situation when he dared to declare that he would preside over city government and enforce the law in such a way that "no one will know whether I am an Adventist or a Methodist."<sup>34</sup> This statement was taken by the prophetess to be the very kind of compromise which could not be tolerated. More to the point, Ellen White felt that Gage, in his new found position of influence was working to undermine her authority in Battle Creek. In a scathing letter which was read before the Battle Creek Church in May of 1882, and a "special testimony" that followed, read in November of the same year, Ellen White attacked Gage along with Uriah Smith and others who supported him. Appealing to a vision of the night, she

---

<sup>34</sup> William Gage 1882 statement to the Press, quoted in Yvonne Anderson, 46; see also, John Kearnes, "Ethical Politics = Adventism and the Case of William Gage," Adventist Heritage, 5 (Summer 1978) 3-15.

said, "In my dream, which seemed a reality... William Gage would with his cunning speeches, take off the edge of the testimonies; and then with a smile of satisfaction, look around as though he had done a smart thing for which he should be congratulated." Other dreams convinced the prophetess that Gage was "flippant," "self-inflated," "self-deceived," an instrument used for the "purpose of Satan," and one who was "deceiving others." She saw that some would "go to their graves with their sins unconfessed" because Gage, Smith and others had "thrown themselves as bodies of darkness between God and the people." Only months after he took office, Ellen White made it publicly clear that Gage was to be removed from denominational employment.

William Gage is wholly unfitted to engage in the work of God. He does not see or sense his true condition... he will prove a snare to the people of God wherever he shall take an active part; for he will lead away from right principles to carelessness and indifference in religious things. He has ever been a curse to the church in Battle Creek... such men will do tenfold more harm than good; because their daily life contradicts their teachings. They are destitute of the Spirit of Truth, unsanctified, unholy. I warn the people of God not to take this man as their pattern. I present such<sup>35</sup> beacons to warn, and not as examples to imitate.

The same man who was chosen for his deep christian commitment as the most worthy candidate in town, was dismissed by the prophetess as a hopeless hypocrite. The

---

<sup>35</sup> White, Special Testimony; see also Kearnes 13, 14.

result of Ellen White's condemnation was that, Gage lost his job at the Review, had his ministerial credentials revoked by the church, and after becoming totally disillusioned with all the controversy refused to run again for political office at the end of his term. Consequently the temperance party could not field a candidate for mayor in the spring election of 1883 and it returned its support to the Republicans. More significantly for this study, Adventism's commitment to political activism had been permanently stifled. In the years that followed, the tone of most articles dealing with socio-political participation in church periodicals reflected a severe note of reservation, not only towards any kind of direct involvement in politics, but even towards the social reforms which Adventists had traditionally favored.<sup>36</sup>

Ironically, the same woman who opened the door for Adventist socio-political activism through her previous statements, and her successful public lectures on temperance which gained her a prominent reputation with the politicians in Battle Creek, closed the same door with her condemnation of Mayor Gage and her later warnings against any public

---

<sup>36</sup> Examples of such articles are, "Prophecy Against National Reform," American Sentinel 7 (1892) 34; "Reform Movements," Signs of the Times 21 (1895) 346; "Christian (?) Politics," Review and Herald 71 (May 8, 1894) 295; "Christians not Politicians," Review and Herald 71 (May 22, 1894) 2.

involvement in politics.<sup>37</sup> This irony has a twofold application for Adventist women. First, it again demonstrates what a dominant role one woman could play within the Adventist community providing she had the right "credentials" or gifts. Secondly, the conservative attitudes which re-emerged in Adventism towards socio-political participation not only have affected attitudes in the church right up to the present concerning issues such as woman's liberation, but also had an affect on the interesting relationship between Adventist women and the WCTU which we will now explore.

#### THE WCTU AND ADVENTIST WOMEN

Millenarianism, or the belief that Christ's imminent second coming would either inaugurate or follow the Millenium (1,000 years reign of God), was considered to be an extreme version of orthodox christian teaching in the nineteenth century. But, as Earnest Sandeen has pointed out, the Millerites did not neatly fit with the traditional factors of disinheritance, crisis, hypocrisy, poverty, demagoguery, fanaticism, and social isolationism, normally

---

<sup>37</sup> Ellen White later told her fellow Adventists that when it came to political issues they were "not to proclaim it by pen or voice". See, Ellen White, Letter 4, 1898 (Ellen G. White Estate-also in EGW Vault LLU/LSC).

identified with Millenarianism.<sup>38</sup> The Millerites were too diverse a group to be easily "packaged and labeled" as millenarians, and the same can be said for their Adventist descendents. While Adventists did certainly believe in an imminent Millennium, they were a complex people who enthusiastically supported some social reforms, while rejecting others that logically seemed comparable in the minds of most reformers. However, according to Adventist reason such seemingly arbitrary distinctions were not irrational, because they grew out of a particular world view. Adventists believed that personal ethics were more important than social ethics. The transformation of individual morality (which dealt with alcohol, tobacco, diet, modesty, adornment, entertainment, etc) was essential for purposes of evangelism and salvation. Whereas, any social transformation of wordly evil was considered not only impossible (because the world was getting worse), but a "futile" and "hopeless" attempt to violate the purposes of God.

For this reason it is not surprising that Ellen White could rebuke Kellogg for his humanitarian work in the slums of Chicago, while she enjoyed the reputation of being an effective temperance reformer. Nor is it hard to understand

---

<sup>38</sup> Ernest Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1970) 53-54.

how she could wholeheartedly support the "underground railroad" during the Abolitionist struggle, based on Adventism's strong commitment to individual liberty (which was a crucial doctrine in Adventist eschatology), while advocating segregated Adventist churches during Reconstruction for the sake of "Gospel harmony." The same logic applies when one attempts to figure out why Ellen White condemned labor reform and feminism, but gave her unqualified support to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The relationship between Adventists and the W.C.T.U. was for many years a love/fear relationship. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to exploring its significance for Adventist women.

Although liquor interests were opposed, and public drunkenness was considered deplorable, in Antebellum America, temperance leadership was basically dominated by men. It was during the dark days of the Civil War that the liquor business really began to thrive in the United (temporarily divided) States. During this period the sellers of spirits were licensed and taxed as a means of deriving much needed revenue. When the war ended, the minds of men were so preoccupied with re-establishing unity and recuperating their fallen fortunes that the question of temperance was not a high priority, and nearly became a dead issue. State after state dropped their prohibition and temperance laws and legalized liquor for the sake of rebuilding their



treasuries. It was in this context that great numbers of men began to lose their jobs, responsibilities and self-respect in the bars, and women decided to take matters into their own hands.<sup>39</sup>

In the early 1870's the sudden emergence of the Woman's Temperance Crusade in the northern and eastern United States, caused considerable controversy. As one might expect Seventh-day Adventists, who had insisted on total abstinence for years, were generally very enthusiastic about the movement, judging from the comments made in church periodicals. Although a few Adventist men had reservations and fears that it bordered on "fanaticism," the women in the church who expressed opinions seemed to favor the crusade with great enthusiasm. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, a strict temperance advocate, described the phenomenon in an 1874 issue of the Health Reformer.

At the present time, there is in progress, in several states, one of the most remarkable temperance movements ever known. ...The peculiarity of this movement consists in the fact that it is conducted almost wholly by ladies, and is associated with, and, in fact, stimulated by, a strong religious excitement... Their method of storming a stronghold of drunkenness is to call upon the proprietors of the establishment, and by the most earnest entreaties endeavor to persuade him to sign the pledge and abandon his nefarious business... The ladies are often subject to all manner of indignities, and frequently their songs and prayers are entirely drowned by the jeers of

---

<sup>39</sup> Silena Holman, "The WCTU and the Temperance Movement," The Watchman Number 22, (1908) 343.

the mocking crowd of ruffians which gathers about them, but with wonderful fortitude and heroism, they endure all, and sometimes continue their meetings for as many as six hours at a time, in the bitter cold, upon the bleak streets. Thus they persevere, day after day, with unbatting energy, determined to conquer, and, in most cases, they finally succeed.<sup>40</sup>

Kellogg went on to relate various "cary Nation type" incidents, in the article which had resulted in the conversions of "notorious saloon keepers." But his enthusiasm for the crusade was short lived, as a follow up article demonstrated, in which he referred to the movement as a "contagious epidemic" of "impulsive, spasmodic action," that was little more than "fanatical, violent religious excitement."<sup>41</sup> He predicted that the affects of the Woman's Crusade (liquor sales dropped dramatically in 1874) would be short lived, and in a sense he was right. Within a year many of the saloons which had been closed reopened and consumption of alcohol again began to increase. But the affects of the Woman's Crusade went far beyond just temperance. In the final months of 1874, one hundred and thirty-five women representing 16 states met in Cleveland, Ohio to organize the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union. From the inception of the W.C.T.U., the issues of "social reform and woman's advancement were intertwined with

---

<sup>40</sup> John Harvey Kellogg, "The Temperance Crusade," Health Reformer 9:1 (1874) 111.

<sup>41</sup> John Harvey Kellogg, Health Reformer "The Temperance Movement," 137.

the questions of temperance." The organization became highly involved in promoting, Woman's suffrage, prison reform, the development of facilities for neglected children and abused wives, federal aid for education, and various other causes relating, particularly, to social justice for women.<sup>42</sup>

Francis Willard, the most influential temperance leader of the nineteenth century and president of this organization for 21 years until her death in 1898, believed that the accomplishments of the W.C.T.U. relating to prohibition and temperance were secondary to what the organization accomplished for women. In 1894 she reflected back on the woman's crusade of the 1870's with these words, "perhaps the most significant outcome of this movement was the knowledge of their own power gained by conservative women of the churches. They had never ever seen a 'woman's rights convention,' and had been aloof from the 'suffragists' by fear as to their orthodoxy;" she continued, "but now there were women prominent in all church cares and duties eager to clasp hands for more aggressive work than such women had

---

<sup>42</sup> The best discussion of the Woman's Temperance Movement with regard to its diversity, and connection with the Woman's Rights Movement, is found in, Ruth Bordin, Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981); see also Barbara Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981) 117, and 91-146.

ever before dreamed of undertaking."<sup>43</sup>

Adventist women, too, were attracted to the W.C.T.U. The Health Reformer promoted Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer's temperance monthly, The Christian Woman, and the Review and Herald kept church members informed concerning the spread of the temperance movement into new states.<sup>44</sup> But no Adventist supported the W.C.T.U. more than Ellen White herself. By 1878 she was speaking to huge audiences on the subject of temperance in states such as Oregon and Colorado, as well as in her own Michigan. She recounted one such experience with these words, "I spoke in a Mammoth tent, Sunday evening, July 1, upon the subject of Christian temperance. God helped me that evening; and although I spoke ninety minutes, the crowd of fully five thousand persons listened in almost breathless silence."<sup>45</sup>

However, in the 1880's political developments within the W.C.T.U., and on the large American political scene, created tensions between Adventists and the W.C.T.U. In January of 1879 the National Reform Association pressured

---

<sup>43</sup> Frances Willard, My Happy Half-Century (London: War, Lock and Bowden, 1894) 359.

<sup>44</sup> "Literary Notices," Health Reformer 12:1 (1897), 349; "Wisconsin Temperance Meeting," R&H (July 10, 1879) 24.

<sup>45</sup> Ellen White, 1877 Testimonies IV, 274-275 and 290-297.

Pennsylvania law makers into passing a Sunday bill, which imposed broad restrictions and carried stiff fines for any individuals, businesses or corporations guilty of violation. This legislation precipitated "a surge of Sunday law agitation" in various other states such as Ohio, New Jersey, Georgia, etc. These laws were enforced with such rigidity that an Adventist farmer arrested for plowing his field on Sunday was "prosecuted on purely religious grounds," and after conscientiously refusing to pay his fine, was imprisoned for 30 days.<sup>46</sup>

The The Review & Herald not only condemned this legislation, but published outside reactions from american citizens who were "seeing their freedoms stripped from them." In this rather awkward situation Adventists found themselves teaming up with democrats, and liquor interests, all agreeing with the angry citizen who denounced the Sunday laws as "unconstitutional, unjust, impious, sectarian and cruel."<sup>47</sup> In the 1882 California election Adventists

---

<sup>46</sup> W. A. Blakey, ed. American State Papers Bearing on Sunday Legislation (Washington D.C.: Religious Liberty Assoc., 1911) 326N; see also Eric Syme, A History of SDA ChurchState Relations in the United States (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1973) 20-31.

<sup>47</sup> "An American Citizen," "Church and State," Review & Herald (May 31, 1881) 337ff; (June 7, 1881) 353. Though Democrats generally opposed prohibition and Sunday laws there were certainly exceptions.

allied themselves with anti-temperance forces to defeat the W.C.T.U. and the Republicans in a campaign where they were so effective, that one political leader later "lamented that 26,000 Adventists did more petitioning than 26,000,000 Christians."<sup>48</sup>

By 1886 the General Conference of SDA's was publishing a new magazine entitled the American Sentinel which advocated religious liberty, and attacked the "religious persecution" of the WCTU and the prohibition party. It also attempted to counteract the general tendency to legislate morality that was popular in American culture at this time. The same year G.I. Butler, the General Conference President, counseled Adventists, in the Review, to continue their support for temperance, but to recognize the alliance between the WCTU and the National Reform Party and to remember that the Sabbath was the greater "issue to which we have devoted our lives."<sup>49</sup> Other articles by men like Uriah Smith, A.T. Jones, and H.F. Phelps were much more fearful of the apocalyptic consequences which could occur with "all the zealous women [WCTU] of our country" throwing

---

<sup>48</sup> Syme, 28; For an example of strict Sabbatarianism among Sunday keepers see, "Protection of the Sabbath as a Civil Institution," Moody Monthly 2 (February 1920) 264.

<sup>49</sup> G.I. Butler, "SD Adventists and their Relation to Temperance Organization," R&H (Feb. 2, 1886) 72; for information on America's tendency to legislate morality, see, Norman Clark Deliver Us From Evil (Norton Essays on American History, 1976).

"their influence in favor of Sunday laws." Members of the WCTU were compared to the "devout and honorable women" who persecuted Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13. Francis Willard was denounced for committing the full support of the WCTU to laws preventing the "desecration of the [Sunday] Sabbath."<sup>50</sup> But above all the need for individual liberty was stressed by Adventists as never before. In the October 1888 issue of the American Sentinel, A.T. Jones accused the lady reformers of attempting to force their religious convictions on others by "compelling people," through legislation, to observe the moral principles proclaimed by the WCTU. The following month Jones tried to demonstrate that the National Reform Association, and the WCTU were not only "antichristian," "subversive," and "guilty of tyranny" in their attempts to destroy religious liberty, but were both linked to the Papacy. In this same issue it was argued that women had become just as "vicious," corrupt, and subject to "fanaticism" as men (an opinion that was not generally shared in the nineteenth century), and therefore, that woman's suffrage could not possibly improve the world. The following statement issued by the WCTU in the Christian Statesman (April 26, 1888), had particularly provoked the

---

<sup>50</sup> "The WCTU Convention," "The Devout and Honorable Women Persecute," "The WCTU and National Reformers," "A Circular Letter from the WCTU," Review & Herald (January 19, 1886) 38; (May 28, 1889) 44; (November 26, 1889) 16; (August 28, 1888) 15.

wrath of Adventists, who accused the organization of suffering from God-delusion.

As Christ came first by Mary alone in the stable at Bethlehem, so shall He come the second time, to reign King and Lord, by this confederation of the women of the whole world, exalted to the high place which is hers under the gospel; not only as the mother and educator of lawmakers and rulers, but set free from the domination of mere animal force, herself co-ruler and legislator in the state as well as in the home, according to God's evident plan that<sup>51</sup> the world should not always be left comfortless.

Jones used this declaration of the WCTU as evidence that they were advocating a "counterfeit" form of Christianity which functioned in the "likeness of the Papacy." He denounced such tactics as the Spirit of Anti-Christ, pointing out that Christ had said, "My kingdom is not of this world," while the WCTU proclaimed that, "Christ shall be this world's king" and claimed to be the primary instrument which would make this a reality.

In 1889 Adventists established the National Religious Liberty Association and chose A.T. Jones to be its first president. Only months before the WCTU had created a Sunday Observance Department, in its own organization, and appointed Mrs. J.C. Bateham as superintendent. She was responsible for submitting enormous lists of petitions to

---

<sup>51</sup> A.T. Jones, "The Sentinel and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union," "Women and the Advent," "Editorial Comment," American Sentinel (October 1888) 78-79; (November 1888) 86,87; (December 1888) 96.



Senator Blair, who drafted the Blair bill, which required the prohibition of Sunday mail, Sunday trains, Sunday parades, etc., on a national scale. In the 1890 political campaigns A.T. Jones was attacked by name for his opposition to the Blair bill, by prominent Republicans. Jones in turn attacked the WCTU for its "blatant persecution" and "flagrant disregard for human rights." In a debate that would last for more than a decade, Adventists and the WCTU found themselves united over temperance, but at odds over Sunday legislation.

In the 1890's, with Ellen White overseas in Australia, Adventist periodicals denounced the WCTU as a movement that had "degenerated into a mere political organization," with "masculine female politicians" who had the "unmitigated gall" to promote political issues in the churches.<sup>52</sup> Adventists applauded the division in the WCTU which created an offshoot movement called the National "non-partison" Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which was opposed to Sunday legislation, and made fun of the WCTU's "biblical ignorance" which allowed them to identify the Sabbath with Sunday. It was also suggested in the Review, that the WCTU "ought to change its name" due to the fact that it had broken from its original charter to become an organization

---

<sup>52</sup> "Learning the Nature of WCTU," Review & Herald (March 17, 1891) 171.

which "endangered liberty" and was controlled by "politics." The worst condemnation, however, came from A.T. Jones who linked the WCTU to the National Reform Association. "The purpose of this Association is only persecution, even to the death, upon all dissenters.... This movement is bound to succeed through the influence of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union."<sup>53</sup>

The tension between Adventists and the WCTU finally began to die down at the end of the century when the WCTU dropped the position that it had advocated for 15 years, choosing instead to support religious toleration, rather than Sunday legislation. This was a change that A.T. Jones welcomed, but still he cautioned against forming close ties with the organization.<sup>54</sup>

This hesitancy to accept the work of the WCTU, even after their change of attitude on Sunday Reform, was more than Ellen White was willing to put up with. In a strong letter to Jones, written in April, 1900, she censured his condemning words against the WCTU and warned him of the "danger of repelling those whom we might win to the truths

---

<sup>53</sup> "WCTU Division," "An Uncalled for Pledge," "Not Temperance But Religion," "Admission And An Acknowledgment," Review and Herald (January 28, 1890); (March 8, 1892) 150; Signs of the Times 21 (1895) 20; R&H (December 10, 1895) 787; A.T. Jones, "Editorial" R&H (December 26, 1899) 836.

<sup>54</sup> A. T. Jones, "The National WCTU on Record," "The WCTU and Sunday Laws," American Sentinel (November 30, 1899) 739, 740; (January 4, 1900) 3, 4.

that God has given us." She accused Jones of "pharisaism" and rebuked him for discouraging Adventists from belonging to the WCTU. Her argument was plain, "we should seek to gain the confidence of the workers in the WCTU by harmonizing with them as far as possible."<sup>55</sup>

Surprisingly enough, there is very little evidence which indicates that Ellen White or her Adventist sisters ever opposed the WCTU or felt highly threatened by their Sunday reform campaign. The many articles appearing in Adventist periodicals which cast a negative light on the organization, were written by men. And while it is true that men wrote most of the articles on all subjects, one would certainly expect Ellen White, who was by far the most authoritative voice in the denomination at this time, to say more than she did about the alledged threat of the WCTU. Her only negative reference to the organization appears to come in a letter she sent to Mrs. S.M.I. Henry, a renown temperance reformer herself, who was converted to Adventism in her later years. This 1898 statement bemoans the fact that some women in the movement were "becoming politicians," but even here she enthusiastically endorses the WCTU throughout the rest of the letter and encourages Henry to remain active in the organization.

---

<sup>55</sup> Ellen White, Letter 59, 1900 (To Elder A. T. Jones, April 18, 1900), p. 1-4.

Some may argue that Ellen White's lack of criticism could be explained by the fact that she was in Australia throughout the 1890's when most of the negative articles appeared, and simply was not aware of the situation. However, the correspondence we do have from her pen concerning the WCTU, during the years it was actively advocating Sunday legislation (1885-1899), does not support such a conclusion. It may be that Ellen's close ties with the WCTU, and the greater independence which she exercised after the death of her husband, gave her deeper insights into the inequities that many women experienced, and made her slightly more sympathetic to the causes of women in her later years. In any case her refusal to speak out against the WCTU is significant. Her strong words of support for Mrs. S.M.I. Henry, and Dr. Lillie Wood Starr,<sup>56</sup> the two most prominent Adventist women in the temperance movement besides the prophetess herself, also support the possible conclusion that Ellen White differed with the opinion of the majority of male leaders in the church who harbored suspicions against the WCTU. Her willingness to rebuke Elder Jones coupled with these other factors certainly seems to support such a conclusion. In one of her final articles

---

<sup>56</sup> Ellen White, Letters to SMI Henry 1898, 1899 (Ms 77, August 15, 1907) 232, 233; and Letter to Lillie Wood Starr, September 19, 1907 (S. - 302 - 07) 274.

on the WCTU she reflected very favorably on her involvement with the organization, and challenged women in the church to "heartily unite" with their "efforts for the spread of temperance."<sup>57</sup>

Ironically, Adventist periodicals said a great deal about human rights, and individual liberty between 1850 and 1925. They argued that no human being has the "right to trample on the rights of others." They insisted that no laws should be tolerated that promoted "injustice" or in any way diminished the "rights and privileges" that all had under the "constitution." They heartily proclaimed that "all men are created equal." They denounced "inequality in government," and even went so far as to proclaim that "equity requires that every person shall have the fullest opportunity to make profitable use of every power that he possesses."<sup>58</sup> But inspite of all this talk about liberty, justice, and equality, Adventists did not support woman's suffrage or the woman's rights movement in general. Ellen White was placed on a prophetic pedestal which allowed her to function as a liberated woman, while she spoke

---

<sup>57</sup> Ellen White, "A Letter From Sister White," Southwestern Union Recorder 7:25 (June 23, 1908) 1.

<sup>58</sup> "Human Rights," Health Reformer 6:1 (1871) 46; "Equal Rights Demanded," Signs of the Times (October 7, 1886); "All Men Are Created Equal," Signs of The Times (December 12, 1895)1; "Equity," Review and Herald (April 11, 1899) 5.

against the feminist philosophy which advocated such a lifestyle. Even within the church itself, women were not allowed to develop their gifts and talents in a way that would allow them to fulfill their potentiality, and fully benefit the denomination. For some Adventist women the obvious gap between the way they were treated, and the way Ellen White operated as a social reformer and church leader, caused significant frustration and confusion. It is to this question of women in the ministry that we will now turn our attention.

## CHAPTER FIVE

PRACTICING WHAT THEY DON'T PREACH  
(Female Ministry and Fundamentalism)

"When a question comes up which ought to be settled quickly, under the influence of the Spirit of God, upon principle, instead of practicing self-denial, instead of bringing yourself up to the point of consecration and that earnest self-surrender to God which would bring you to the place into which you could yourself see in the light of the Spirit, just what to do with that case, you think, 'Well, we will get help through Sister White;' and then you just leave it, you lay the burden off on her, instead of carrying it yourself. I do not think this is fair...God is no respecter of persons, and he is perfectly willing to give that measure of the Holy Spirit to everyone of his servants that will enable them to see clearly, so that we shall not be obliged to wait [for Ellen White], as I said the other evening, six weeks to get an answer from the Lord."

Mrs. Sarepta M. I. Henry  
Statement to the General Conference 1899

In addition to the factors of domesticity, ruralism, victorian sexuality, and resistance to socio-political involvement, which we have discussed in previous chapters, Adventism's firm commitment to, and involvement with, the Fundamentalist Movement of the early twentieth century, also contributed to the church's subordination of women and opposition to feminism.

Fundamentalist Christians were hostile to most societal changes that served to elevate the status of women, and

interpreted Scripture in a literalistic manner which generally viewed female ministry with suspicion and condemnation. Adventism, which emerged as an official organization half a century before The Fundamentals was published in 1911, shared many of the same concerns that were voiced by Fundamentalist churches including their pessimistic and apocalyptic world view.

Fundamentalism can be briefly defined as militantly anti-modernist protestant evangelicalism. It originally grew out of the nineteenth century American revivalist establishment, and declared war on the higher critical approach to Scripture and theology, as well as the cultural changes, that modernism endorsed. It is the militant opposition to progressive liberal trends in Protestant Christianity that sets fundamentalism apart from revivalism, evangelicalism, pietism, millennialism, millenarianism, the holiness movements, and a host of other closely related traditions that developed in nineteenth century America.<sup>1</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist church naturally identified with the fundametalist movement because of its strong opposition to higher cricital methods and the theory of evolution. Adventists were deeply committed to a literal

---

<sup>1</sup> George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) 4.



interpretation of the Bible whenever this was possible,<sup>2</sup> and therefore advocated a literal understanding of creation week which was tied to their belief in the seventh day Sabbath. The church also strongly identified with the moral reforms for which fundamentalists were crusading as well. But this is not to imply that Adventists viewed the fundamentalist cause from an interdenominational perspective, because their sectarian suspicion of all other churches prevented this type of approach. However, from a uniquely Adventist viewpoint the church did join with the fundamentalists in combating the spread of modernism.

As George Marsden has pointed out, the Fundamentalist Movement was a powerful force in American politics, similar to the Religious Right today, in the first quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Seventh-day Adventists, while avoiding the political arena, strongly supported the Fundamentalist crusades against intemperance, alcohol, tobacco, immodesty, jewelry, labor unions, dancing and a host of other "vicious habits" and worldly practices, such

---

<sup>2</sup> The following works all express the Adventist emphasis on literal interpretation of scripture during this period: G.I. Butler Valuable Historial Extracts (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1885) 7-13; Facts For The Times (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1893) 16, 17; H.L. Hastings, Will The Old Book Stand, (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald 1895) 31-51.

<sup>3</sup> Marsden, 141-184.

as theater attendance, bowling, cardplaying, gambling, etc.<sup>4</sup> During this period the church also published The Protestant Magazine, a periodical committed to attacking modernism in all its forms. However, the publication primarily consisted of sweeping judgments against Evolutionism, Roman Catholicism, higher education and higher criticism, which revealed a fear of the theological and socio-cultural changes that occurred during the years between 1870 and 1925.

The Feminist Movement was perceived by Fundamentalists to be a particularly dangerous evil because it not only followed the higher critics in rejecting the absolute divine authority of scripture, but in so doing, also "destroyed the Moral Foundation" of America by departing from traditional views of family and authority. The writings of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the earliest radical feminist critics of scripture, represented the complete anti-thesis of what Adventists and other Fundamentalists were teaching concerning "God's Ordained role for women." Stanton maintained that the Bible was the product of a patriarchal culture, and as a document had actually done women more harm

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 156-163. See also Steve Daily, "How Readest Thou: The Higher Criticism Debate in Protestant America" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Loma Linda University, 1982) 37, 38. Adventism continues to emphasize its opposition to these practices in the 1980's.

than good.

The old testament makes women a mere after-thought in creation; the author of evil; cursed in her maternity; a subject in marriage; and all female life; animal and human, unclean... The time has come to read (the Bible) as we do all other books, accepting the good and rejecting the evil it teaches.

Such an attitude towards scripture was inaccurately attributed to feminists in general, and was considered to be nothing short of blasphemy by Fundamentalists. Therefore it is not surprising that a strict Fundamentalist church, such as Seventh-day Adventists were at this time, found itself alienated against those who called themselves feminists or participated in any movement for women's rights. The Fundamentalist churches were also the most outspoken critics of women's ordination, because they felt it was a practice which violated the clear teaching of Scripture.

The demise of Victorianism<sup>6</sup> and Fundamentalism which occurred in America during the 1920's resulted in an increasing detachment from the cultural mainstream for most Fundamentalist groups.<sup>7</sup> This drift towards obscurity and

---

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, The Woman's Bible (New York: European Publ. 1895, Reprint ed., Arno Press, 1972), part 2, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley Coben, "The Assault on Victorianism in the Twentieth Century," in Daniel Howe (ed.) Victorian America, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 161.

<sup>7</sup> Marsden, 184-195.

sectarian isolationism that generally affected the majority of churches in the Fundamentalist movement, to a degree occurred within Seventh-day Adventism as well, but other factors would also emerge that served to pull Adventists away from Fundamentalism at the same time. These factors would also have a profound affect upon women in the church. In this chapter we will first consider the struggle which women engaged in outside of Adventism, as they sought leadership roles in the churches between 1850 and 1925, and how this was affected by the Modernist-Fundamentalist debate. Then we will explore Ellen White's ministerial role within the Adventist church, and compare it with what she said about female ministry and what Adventist women generally experienced in terms of participation in ministry during this period when the church was firmly committed to Fundamentalism.

#### NON-ADVENTIST WOMEN AND MINISTRY

The nineteenth century was an era in the history of American religion, which witnessed a profound evolutionary increase, in the role of woman's influence and participation in the churches. The general belief in separate sexual spheres and the moral superiority of women, served to reinforce the notion that females were domestic creatures who had a natural inclination towards religion, and therefore a God given mission and responsibility to work a

spiritual transformation in the world. Protestant women played a prominent part in furthering the expansionist and imperialist policies of America through their various missionary endeavors, which linked the God ordained salvation of the world to nationalistic notions of manifest destiny and progress. In addition to their missionary accomplishments women also made great strides in the field of education. Even the barriers of ministerial ordination were broken by women in the nineteenth century in a number of churches. Unfortunately, changes which allowed women to exercise their gifts in a new and self-actualizing manner, did not generally occur due to the far sighted and progressive actions of male leadership in the churches, but rather, occurred in spite of the strong opposition which females usually faced from such quarters. Not only was this opposition most evident in the conservative fundamental churches which generally defined the essence of religion in terms of doctrinal purity and personal piety, but it was also found in many churches that participated in the social gospel movement. While there were a host of supportive men who advocated complete sexual equality in these churches, the progressive changes which gradually opened new doors to women in American religion, and society in general, came for

the most part through the efforts of women themselves.<sup>8</sup>

Nancy Hardesty has identified two basic models of female ministry in the nineteenth century, which provide helpful insights into the leadership roles that women occupied in both sectarian religious movements as well as in the mainline churches. On the one hand, she refers to those women, such as Anna Oliver and Francis Willard, who argued that the pastorate was a nurturing profession and therefore a "motherly work" or natural position for women to fill. This argument was based on the assumption that the female nature was more spiritually inclined, and that "mother-hearted women" were not only ordained by God to save the home, but were "called to be the saviors of the human

---

<sup>8</sup> The renaissance in woman's studies which has occurred in the last decade has focused a great deal of attention on this question of how the established churches either helped or hindered woman's struggle for equality in the nineteenth century. While historians of religion in America differed on this point in the early 1970' (See Robert Handy A Christian America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 89-93; William Clebsch, From Sacred To Profane America (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 79-88; Martin Marty, Righteous Empire (New York: Dial Press, 1970) 98, 174, 203-204; Winthrop Hudson, Religion In America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973) 203, 204, 316f; Sydney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) 642-44; The more recent works of a number of scholars, such as Virginia Brereton, Christa Klein, James Will, Janet Everhart, Rosemary Keller, Donald Gorrell, and William Noll, which we will specifically refer to later, demonstrate that women gained ordination and leadership roles in the churches through their own efforts, and particularly through their accomplishments in the woman's missionary movement.

race."<sup>9</sup> Willard, who had "the deepest desire" to be ordained as a minister herself but never had her longing granted, used the rhetoric of the "Cult of True Motherhood" to support her belief that the ministry would be greatly improved if women were ordained.

If the refinement, sympathy, and sweetness of the womanly nature, as men describe it, fit women especially for the sacred duties of the pastoral office, and these qualities are raised to their highest power by the relationships of wife and mother, as all must grant who have not forgotten the priestesses of their own early homes and present firesides, then, other things being equal, that woman who is a mother and a wife is, above all others, consecrated and set apart by nature to be a minister in the household of Faith. Viewed without prejudice, this position is invulnerable.<sup>10</sup>

Willard, like many other women, argued that the female sex was biologically better suited to the ministry. Women had "more accurate and quicker intuitions than those of men," which would work to their advantage in "winning souls to Christ." She asserted that the male ministry was guilty of proclaiming a theoretical religion or preaching "the dead letter rather than the living gospel."<sup>11</sup> Yet, in spite of such assertions, and attempts to prod the major denomina-

---

<sup>9</sup> Francis Willard, WCTU Minutes (1888), pp. 1, 48; quoted in Nancy Hardesty "Minister as Prophet? or as mother?", in Women in New Worlds (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1981) I, 97.

<sup>10</sup> Francis Willard, Women in the Pulpit (Boston: Lothrop, 1888) 65.

<sup>11</sup> Francis Willard, quoted in Hardesty, 98, 100.

tions into ordaining women, little progress was made, in terms of actual results, by those who insisted that females were naturally more inclined to occupy the pastorate than males. This line of reasoning only tended to provoke a reactionary call for, "manliness in the ministry", in various church periodicals.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, nineteenth century women did become ordained pastors, or occupy significant positions of leadership in denominational and sectarian religious movements, by appealing to a second female model of ministry which Hardesty describes as the model of the "Pentecostal prophet." Simply put, this model was based on the argument that women were called to the work of ministry by the Spirit of God, just as surely as men, and were therefore ordained by the "bloody palms" of Christ whether or not this ordination was confirmed or recognized by the institutional church. Women like Antoinette Brown, an ordained Congregational minister, and Phoebe Palmer, a lay preacher in the holiness movement of Methodism, both employed this model to legitimate their calls to the ministry. These two women are representative of the two classes of women who followed in their footsteps. Like Brown, some 60 women were

---

<sup>12</sup> For an example of such articles see "Manliness of the Ministry", The Christian Advocate (March 28, 1924) (4), 388.



ordained as ministers in Congregational, Baptist, and other protestant christian denominations in the nineteenth century. However, such ordinations were considered to be simply recognizing the divine call, and spiritual gifts, that these women already possessed. At Brown's ordination service in 1853, the reverend Luther Lee declared, "we are not here to make a minister. It is not to confer on this our sister, a right to preach the gospel. If she has not that right already, we have no power to communicate it to her."<sup>13</sup> The ordination of the Spirit was readily acknowledged and granted a position of precedence over the ordination of the institutional church. Unfortunately, even by the end of the nineteenth century the Lutherans, Episcopalians Methodists and Presbyterians still had not ordained a woman, and most of the orthodox denominations were not encouraging women to enter the ministry.<sup>14</sup> The frustration which many gifted women felt, who only wished for the freedom to fulfill God's call, was expressed by

---

<sup>13</sup> Luther Lee, Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel: Ordination Sermon for Antoinette Brown (Sept 15, 1853), quoted in Barbara Zikmund, "The Struggle for the Right to Preach", in Rosemary Ruether and Rosemary Keller (eds.) Women and Religion in America, (New York: Harper & Row, 1981) 195.

<sup>14</sup> Anna Howard Shaw, "Women in the Ministry" (1898), 489-496.

Josephine Butler in 1892.

Give us Freedom; refuse us office if you like, though it would be more just of you to share all offices with women. But give us only freedom in the name and in the Spirit of Christ; and then you shall see what God may do with women, in the great work of the world's salvation...When the church or the churches, become more deeply humble; when they have realized even more than they do now, their desperate need of the help of woman as man's equal, absolutely, in her relation to spiritual things, they will grant the freedom we ask; and then good gifts will no longer languish in a prison-house of conventionalities, and women's energies will not have to be folded in napkins and buried under the church floor.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to most of the mainline denominations, some of the more marginal and sectarian religious movements, and holiness denominations, such as the Salvation Army, the Church of the Nazarene, the Pilgrim Holiness Church, the Universalists, the Unitarians, the Quakers, the Christian Scientists, the Pillar of Fire, the Assemblies of God and other Pentacostal churches, not only ordained women as ministers in similar numbers to men, but generally gave them an equal voice in church leadership as well. Many of the utopian religious movements such as the Shaker Communities, New Harmony, Hopedale, Brook Farm, and Oneida also stressed an egalitarian philosophy of leadership which made them less

---

<sup>15</sup> Josephine Butler, "Women's Place in the Church", Magazine of Christian Literature 6 (April, 1892) 32; quoted in Zikmund, 195.

guilty of subordinating, or discriminating against, women.<sup>16</sup> These movements generally allowed the charismatic gifts of women to surface, in an atmosphere of freedom and openness, believing that in Christ there was neither "male nor female," and that the spirit was no respecter of sexuality.

It was in the context of such sectarian and charismatic freedom that Phoebe Palmer was able to become the key figure in the widespread holiness revival of the nineteenth century, which spawned several of the above mentioned churches. Palmer more than any other woman advocated the God ordained validity of female ministry based on the model of the pentecostal preacher or prophet. She argued that "the scriptural idea of the terms preach and prophesy" were "inseparably connected as one and the same thing." She also pointed out that the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the tongues of fire which descended from God, affected male and female alike. She believed, therefore, that the

---

<sup>16</sup> See Barbara Zikmund, "The Feminist Thrust of Sectarian Christianity," in Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (eds.) Women of Spirit, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979) 216-222; Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (New York: Harper & Row, 1944, 1962) 442, 443; Ana Shaw, 489-496; Hardesty, 96; Mary Farrell Bednarowski, "Outside the Mainstream: Women's Religion and Women Religious Leaders in Nineteenth Century America," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 48:2 (1980) 207-231; Lawrence Foster, Religion and Sexuality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 13ff, 91ff.

prophecy of Joel fulfilled at Pentecost, which prompted women to "prophecy" (Acts 2) and "preach the word" (Acts 8:4) amply demonstrated the divine commission to all women who felt called by the Spirit to preach the gospel in her own day.<sup>17</sup> Encouraged by Palmer and others, hundreds of women responded to such a call in the nineteenth century. The model of "Pentecostal prophet," though very different from the model of "visionary prophet" which gave women like Ellen White, Ann Lee, and Mary Baker Eddy tremendous influence in their respective communities, was the most effective model by which women entered the ministry or became actively involved in church leadership. However, the woman's missionary movement, which was the most significant woman's movement to emerge within the mainline churches in the nineteenth century, drew on the models of both Willard and Palmer to challenge the institutionalized church, by forcing the major denominations to consider the tremendous potential of women.

When the Woman's Board of Missions was founded by the Congregational church in 1868 as the first official woman's missionary society, few anticipated the tremendous impact that such organizations would have on the major protestant

---

<sup>17</sup> Phoebe Palmer, The Promise of the Father (Boston: Henry V. Degen, 1859) 14-18, 21-23, 34; quoted in Hardesty, "Minister as Prophet or as Mother," 94, 95.

churches in the next four decades. By the end of the 1870's every major protestant denomination had such a society, and during the 1880's many of these women's organizations became more effective in terms of fund raising, missionaries sent, buildings erected, and other tangible projects accomplished, than the established male-led missionary organizations in their respective denominations.<sup>18</sup> This unexpected success, which resulted from charismatic leadership that managed to motivate, organize, and inspire literally thousands of women, and equip them with a vision of volunteerism, and a mission of saving their unfortunate sisters in other nations from the "degrading practices of heathenism,"<sup>19</sup> produced strong tensions between institutional authorities in the various churches and these lay women's missionary organizations. The societies had started in the first place, because the mainline denominations had encouraged women to see what they could accom-

---

<sup>18</sup> Virginia Brereton and Christa Klein, "American Women in Ministry," in Janet Wilson Jones (ed.) Women in American Religion, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 175-177; William Noll, "Laity Rights and Leadership," in Keller and Thomas, I, 222; and Rosemary Keller, "Creating a Sphere for Women," in Keller and Thomas, I, 247ff.

<sup>19</sup> To understand the degree to which the thrust of the woman's missionary movement was an attack against heathen practices that affected women, see Joan Brumberg, "Zenanas and Girlless Villages: The Ethnology of American Evangelical Women, 1870-1910," Journal of American History 69:2 (September 1982) 347-371; see also "Mission Work Among Women," Sunday School Times, (August 12, 1905) 443.

plish through volunteerism. The denial of woman's ordination, and proper lay representation in the churches, had created a vacuum that females were eager to fill, hence the full energies of many women were invested in the cause of missions when the opportunities became available.

Women created their own separate sphere in the churches through their involvement in independent missionary societies. However, their diligent accomplishments generally led to confrontation and compromise with church leaders who were threatened by the overwhelming results that the movement produced. Control of these societies, and their financial resources, gradually drifted into institutional hands, and in most cases women gave up power in each denomination as they chose, under some pressure, to merge their societies with the larger church organizations.<sup>20</sup> Many women felt betrayed and manipulated by these mergers, and some even questioned their denominational allegiances, but in spite of the disappointments, the woman's missionary movement did benefit women in important and tangible ways. First, it created networks of support and sisterhood among women who became involved in the societies. Secondly, it benefitted those who were sent out into overseas and urban missions, as they experienced the blessings of service.

---

<sup>20</sup> Klein and Brereton, 182.

Thirdly, it helped the recipients, who were primarily women in need of evangelism, education and medical care, and who appreciated the efforts made in their behalf, in spite of the imperialistic and condescending attitudes which sometimes characterized the work. Finally, the woman's missionary movement most probably accelerated the process by which lay women were given a greater voice in the churches, and women who felt called were ordained to the gospel ministry. Rosemary Keller has described the movement as an attempt to destroy the "last cast of sex." By creating their own separate sphere of ministry, women laid the foundation for the eventual removal of such a sphere, and opened the doors to greater equality for women in the churches.<sup>21</sup>

It would be wrong, however, to assume that the woman's missionary societies were the only cause leading to new church leadership positions for women in the early twentieth century, even if it may have been the most influential factor. There was also the triumphant feminism which

---

<sup>21</sup> Rosemary Keller, "Lay Women in the Protestant Tradition," in Rutherford and Keller 249-251; For more information on the relationship between the women's missionary movement and the churches willingness to ordain women and extend greater rights to the laity see William Noll, "Laity Rights and Leadership"; Donald Gorrell, "A New Impulse"; James Will, "Ordination of Women"; Janet Everhart, "The Methodist Episcopal Church Considers the Question of Women Clergy"; all in Keller and Thomas, I, 219-245, II, 290-317.

accomplished the passage of the nineteenth amendment. There were the woman's social reform movements of the period. There was the emergence of higher criticism and new perspectives on biblical interpretation. There was the sentimentalization of American religion which Ann Douglas has documented. There was woman's success in staffing critical institutions on the home front during World War I. There were the industrial economic factors which contributed a great deal to the changing conception of sexual roles. And there were new educational opportunities open to women which had never been available before. All of these factors would come into play in the modernist fundamentalist debate, and the argument over woman's role in the churches.

When leading advocates of female education, such as Catherine Beecher and Margaret Fuller, criticized the lack of educational and professional opportunities open to women in antebellum America, and called for educational reforms, their ideas were generally met with prejudice and opposition. In an age when a defender of the female intellect could refer to woman as "the connecting link...between man and the inferior animals," it is not surprising that the suggestion that women be fully educated prompted a male critic to retort, "they'll be educating the



cows next."<sup>22</sup> In conservative Christian circles, and particularly in fundamentalist groups like Adventism, higher education itself was often viewed with great suspicion. Therefore, when major gains in the field of education were made for women after the civil war, at a time when Darwinism and higher criticism were just beginning to make their greatest impact on American thinking, it is not surprising that many evangelical christians reacted against woman's attempts to enter the universities and emerge as doctors, lawyers or ministers.<sup>23</sup> One prominent spokesman, who strongly opposed female infringement into male schools and occupations, was a congregational theologian by the name of Horace Bushnell. In 1869, Bushnell published his influential book, The Reform Against Nature, which argued that woman was not the victim of subordination by man, but

---

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture, (New York: Knopf, 1977) 58, 59; see also Joan Burstyn, "Catherine Beecher and The Education of American Women," in Women's Experience in America (New Brunswick: New Brunswick Transaction Inc., 1979) 219-234.

<sup>23</sup> Donna Behnke, Created in God's Image (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1975) 215-263; For a discussion of the academic and intellectual roots of the woman's movement see Rosalind Rosenberg, Beyond Separate Spheres (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); see also the following articles which reflect conservative christian attitudes on education, Arthur Copeland, "An Old School Under Rules and Discipline," Methodist Review (July 1904) 586-589; Charles Blanchard, "What is Meant by a Christian College," Moody Monthly (April 1925) 370.

was through the divine order of "Creation", and the universal laws of nature, a subsidiary, derivative, subject of the male.

Visibly the man has precedence and the woman a subordinate lot, only it is no more the sweet relationship of order and protective sympathy originally intended, but of one made hard and dry by the partly retributive extirpations of love and tenderness. And still, under so many repulses and discouragements, the desire of the woman is, none the less fixedly, to the man and to his rule, harsh as it is now become in its severity, and dismally distempered by the abuse of power.<sup>24</sup>

This appeal to divine order to justify the subordination of woman was tremendously popular in conservative religious literature of the nineteenth century. Church periodicals such as the Millennial Harbinger, Moody Monthly, Methodist Review, and Christian Advocate reinforced such thinking,<sup>25</sup> and a host of evangelical ministers reacted to the anti-clericalism of feminists like the Grimke sisters, Stanton and Gage with the strongest "biblical arguments" they could muster, from pen or pulpit. In Boston the Reverend Hubbard Winslow published an influential sermon on the divine limitations of woman's activities, and

---

<sup>24</sup> Horace Bushnell, The Reform Against Nature (New York: Scribner, 1869) 75, 76.

<sup>25</sup> See "Woman's Mission," Millennial Harbinger 6:8 (August 1856) 463; "Shall Women Exhort in Public?," Millennial Harbinger 7:7 (July 1864) 325ff; "Woman's Work in the Church," Millennial Harbinger 40:7 (July, 1869) 377ff; "Silence of Women in the Churches," Methodist Review (April 1878) 240-243; "Shall we Ordain Women?," Christian Advocate (May 23, 1924) 29 (669).

Dr. H. K. Root of New York enjoyed great popularity as a writer and speaker who warned that modern men, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, were inviting catastrophe if they relinquished their judgement to the modern Eves who longed for power and position. Other fundamentalists, or anti-feminists, such as the Reverend John Todd, Charles Duren, D.R. Cady, J. M. Stevenson, Charles Blanchard, Henry Van Dyke and Methodist Bishop R. H. Hargrove, attacked the "gross ignorance" of feminist exegesis in the last four decades of the nineteenth century, using traditional interpretations of Pauline and Mosaic "proof texts" to support their case against female leadership and woman's ordination.<sup>26</sup>

Another major argument used against feminists by religious authorities was the accusation that "woman's righters" were "modern agitators" who were determined to destroy God ordained spheres for male and female that were prescribed in scripture. No man expressed this view with greater conviction or influence than the Methodist clergyman, and outspoken critic of woman's suffrage, Daniel Wise. Wise, who was quoted with approval by Ellen White, attacked "the audacity of modern innovators" who dared to trample on the sacred traditions of God's word, by

---

<sup>26</sup> Donna Behnke, Religious Issues in Nineteenth Century Feminism (New York: Whitson, 1982) 52ff, 110.

discarding "ancient ideas" and "transgressing the masculine sphere." His well known work, The Young Lady's Counselor, ridiculed "masculine women" and warned young ladies against following their example.

The ballot-box, the hustings, the bar, the halls of legislation, the offices of state, the pulpit, are demanded as fitting arenas for the exercise of your talents. There ought to be no barrier in your way to any position in society whatever, merely because you are a woman. And you are wronged, injured and proscribed, so long as you are debarred, either by law or prejudice, from entering any sphere you may prefer. Such are the claims set up and advocated for your sex, by those who would have you not a woman, but an Amazon.<sup>27</sup>

To such statements many feminists responded with equally strong rhetoric. Preachers who advocated these views were denounced as "self-deceived misogynists" who were guilty of "priestcraft" and "prostituting the pulpit." One advocate of equal rights went so far as to call them the "very vilest and lowest" human beings, who were "animated by a brutal, cowardly, and devilish spirit."<sup>28</sup> In a more tempered response Amelia Bloomer lamented the fact that women had been "taught that God created them inferior, and designed them to occupy an inferior and subordinate position, and that to rebel against men's rule was to rebel

---

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Wise, The Young Lady's Counselor (Boston: G. Lane and Scott, 1852) 84-85, see also 81-89.

<sup>28</sup> Behnke, Religious Issues, 96, 110.

against God."<sup>29</sup> The most venomous response to pulpit and press alike, came from William Lloyd Garrison who strongly condemned the "false religion" of those who would deny sexual equality in the name of God. In a convention address in New York City he stated,

Show me a cause anathematized by the chief priests, the scribes, and the pharisees; which politicians and demagogues endeavor to crush, which reptiles and serpents in human flesh try to spread their slime over, and hiss down, and I will show you a cause which God loves, and angels contemplate with admiration.<sup>30</sup>

Men like William Lloyd Garrison and women like Isabella Baum Free, who became popularly known as Sojourner Truth, had a vision for human rights which transcended the issue of sexual inequality. These two individuals represented the best of their respective sexes, by committing themselves to social justice without compromise, even if it meant speaking out against people of position, power and authority. Sojourner Truth, who spent the final years of her life lecturing at the Adventist Sanitarium in Battle Creek, was very much like Garrison in her willingness to fearlessly rebuke even the "high and mighty," who opposed the victim of injustice. In her most famous speech, delivered at the Ohio Women's Convention in the 1850's, she verbalized the

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

frustrations that so many women felt who had been continually beaten down, by male clergy, with arguments against sexual equality, that were alledgedly based on the clear teaching of Scripture. Directing her comments at a hostile clergyman, she stated,

Den dat little little man in black dar [truth stood approximately 6 feet tall] he say women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wan't a woman! Whar did your Christ come from? What did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothin' to do wid Him!... And if de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn de world upside down all alone, dese women togedder ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now dey is asking to do it, de men better let'em. Obleeged to ye for hearin' on me, and now old Sojourner han't got nothin' more to say.<sup>31</sup>

It was this kind of fearless heroism that encouraged many women to stand up for their rights against the strong condemnation that came from churchmen. However, such courage also inspired the support of many clergymen who favored equal rights for women, such as, Almond Davis, Edward Lyttleton, William Love, Theodore Schmauk, David Sherman, John Foster and Charles Torrey. By the 1880's some of the mainline denominations, began to sensitize themselves to the concerns of feminists. This trend would continue on into the twentieth century, but fundamentalists, such as

---

<sup>31</sup> Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I A Woman," in Nation Under God: A Religious Patriotic Anthology (New York: Channel Press, 1967) 150.

Adventists, would generally remain firm in their opposition to suffrage, woman's ordination and the feminist movement.

#### ELLEN WHITE AND OTHER ADVENTIST WOMEN

Ellen White, like many of her fundamentalist contemporaries, believed that the Bible was inspired with an absolute authority that could be directly applied to specific issues in her day, in a rather literalistic manner. Supporting the position of verbal inspiration in 1876, she stated, "the scribes of God wrote as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, having no control of the work themselves."<sup>32</sup> A decade later, when her own inspiration was being attacked, she took a more moderate stand, arguing that the Bible writers had their thoughts inspired, but used their own words in writing scripture.<sup>33</sup> This view of inspiration which did not lessen the absolute authority of Scripture in her opinion, fit more closely with her own "visionary experience," but did not always harmonize with her later statements concerning inspiration. In 1900 she again emphasized her belief in the importance of each individual word in the Bible saying, "Every word is a

---

<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, Testimonies To The Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948) IV, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Ellen White, Manuscript 24, 1886, Selected Messages I, 20, 21; her statements in these pages are paraphrased from Calvin Stone, Origin and history of the Books of the Bible 19, though unacknowledged.

valuable pearl. No word is to lose its virtue and force. One word changed would injure the thought and destroy the lesson taught." Later in the same manuscript, she continued, "The Holy Spirit directed and impressed the writers of the Bible. These men did not write words of human wisdom, but words given them by God."<sup>34</sup> This view of inspiration closely paralleled the absolute inerrancy advocated by the Fundamentalists, and certainly influenced the way Ellen White interpreted passages dealing with women.

In her first commentary on the Old Testament, entitled Patriarchs and Prophets, she drew on traditional Protestant thinking by blaming woman for the fall and labeling the "sentence of Subordination," which was allegedly pronounced upon women by God, to the disobedience and sin of Eve. Applying the Genesis story to the contemporary issue of feminism, in 1875, she wrote,

Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband's side in her Eden home, but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar result will be reached by all who . . . have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character, and have left undone the very work that Heaven appointed them.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Ellen White, "A Work To be Done for God," MS. 40, 1900 (June 16, 1900).

<sup>35</sup> Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, (Washington: Review and Herald, 1890, 1958) 59.



Feminist exegetes generally interpreted the fall narrative in one of three ways: 1) claiming that it was not a literal story; 2) Arguing that Adam's sin was as great if not greater than Eve's; or 3) pointing out that Eve's subordination (Gen.3:16) was the consequence of male exploitation, which resulted from sin, and was not a divine order or command from God.<sup>36</sup> Ellen White, however, rejected all such interpretations believing that woman's subjection could be traced to the fall of Eve, and God's "punitive response."

Pauline passages, which had traditionally been used to promote the subordination of wives and other women, were generally either supported or left unchallenged in the writings of Ellen White. Not only did she strongly subscribe to Paul's declaration that the husband was head over the wife, but condemned any action on the part of women that detracted from the husbands "dignified position."<sup>37</sup> In 1862 she wrote,

It is the duty of the wife to yield her wishes and will to her husband. Both should be yielding, but the word of God gives preference to the judgement of the husband. And it will not detract from the dignity of the wife to yield to him whom she has chosen to be her counselor, advisor, and protector.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Behnke, 117-122.

<sup>37</sup> Ellen White, Testimonies I, 307, 308.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

In the final years of her husband's life, and after his death in 1881, Mrs. White became increasingly independent. She never again advocated unqualified submission, but she continued to support woman's subordination while putting greater stress on the texts that emphasized male responsibilities.

In the 1870's and '80's the prophetess also occupied a much more prominent role as a public speaker. She not only gave numerous lectures on health and temperance, but preached with great regularity in Adventist pulpits. For the most part, Ellen White was not harassed or criticized for her public preaching, particularly when compared to other nineteenth century female preachers, but on occasion she was confronted with the texts that instructed women to keep silent in church, and denied them the right to teach or have authority over men (I Cor. 14:34, I Tim. 1:11-15). On one such occasion, when she was challenged by a Campbellite to respond to such texts in front of a large congregation that she had just addressed she allowed Elder Stephen Haskell to answer the questioner for her.<sup>39</sup> This seemed to be her practice in such situations, judging from the fact that she never commented on these controversial texts, leaving other

---

<sup>39</sup> Ellen White, Letter 17a, 1880, p. 2 (Written from Oakland, California, April 1, 1880, to James White).

Adventist women without a word from the prophetess which might encourage them to preach the Gospel.

The question of woman's ordination in nineteenth century Adventism was discussed with surprising frequency, but never granted by church leadership except on a very limited scale. Ellen White's role in these discussions was extremely influential, because on the one hand she indentified the ministry as a male profession and did not seek official ordination at the hands of church leaders, while on the other hand she functioned as a public preacher and evangelist and accepted full ministerial credentials with the responsibilities and privileges that accompanied them. When one attempts to sort out the seeming contradiction between what she said, and how she acted, in regard to this sensitive subject it becomes crucial to place her various statements in a proper historical context.

In the early years of her ministry Ellen White occupied a subordinate position to many of the male leaders in the Adventist movement. When her visions on the "shut door" or close of probation led Advent believers to adopt a doctrinal view that proved to be untenable, her husband who was editor of the Review refused to publish her visions in the church paper for four years (1851-1855).<sup>40</sup> During the 1850's and

---

<sup>40</sup> See Rolf Poehler, "And The Door Was Shut" (Andrews University Research paper; Ellen White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1978) 75-77.

'60's Ellen did not do a great deal of preaching, and would generally not preach if her husband was present or available to speak. She also said virtually nothing about the role of female ministry in the church during these decades, subscribing to the notion that a woman's place was in her home.

But with the emergence of the woman's missionary movement in the 1870's Ellen White began to encourage Adventist women to become Gospel workers outside the home without compromising their domestic duties. During this decade Adventists sent their first male missionaries overseas, but, unlike many other denominations, did not organize their own Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. However Adventists did establish a "Home Missionary Movement" which published a column in the Review called "Woman's Gospel Work," which challenged female church members to engage in various forms of volunteerism. In a number of periodicals Ellen White rebuked women in the church who were using domestic responsibilities as an "excuse" for not participating in missionary activities. She lamented that many "Christian Sisters" were "wasting time and energy" through a "love for idleness" that was undermining the work of God.<sup>41</sup> In 1878, she appealed to women to become

---

<sup>41</sup> Ellen White, Review and Herald (December 12, 1878), quoted in Christian Service, 29; The Health Reformer

involved in the "many branches of missionary work" that were being "neglected" by the churches. She argued that "sisters" were "better qualified" than men to perform a host of tasks which ranged from clerical work, to home visitation and personal ministry. She maintained that "through missionary labor they [women] can reach a class that our ministers cannot reach."<sup>42</sup>

As more women became involved in different types of volunteer ministry in the 1880's, the question of women's ordination surfaced in Adventism, just as it had in so many other denominations. At the 1881 General Conference session on optimistic delegate proposed a resolution which was intended to admit women into the ranks of ordained Adventist ministry. The action was recorded as follows: "Resolved, that females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill the position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry."<sup>43</sup> Leading Elders such as A. C. Bourdeau, W. H. Littlejohn,, D. M. Canright and J. N. Loughborough discussed the proposal,

---

(June 1873), quoted in Welfare Ministry, 148; Health Reformer (June 1873), quoted in Welfare Ministry, 147; see also, "Women as Christian Laborers," R&H 12:36 (September 16, 1886).

<sup>42</sup> Ellen White, Review and Herald (December 19, 1878); see also Welfare Ministry, 147.

<sup>43</sup> "The Conference," Review and Herald, 58:25 (December 20, 1881) 392.

but it was ultimately tabled and referred to the General Conference Committee, never to be brought up again. The tensions between progressives and conservatives at the Conference evidently made this issue "too hot to handle," forcing the church to deal with the practical problem of having too few workers in ways that would not be so politically volatile.<sup>44</sup> However, the question of Ellen White's ministerial status was not so easily dismissed.

By the end of the 1870's Ellen White was advocating a much more active role for women in ministry than she had ever suggested before. In 1879, she made an uncharacteristic statement, in the Review which called for a twenty fold increase in the number of Adventist women who were willing to publicly preach the Gospel.

Women can be the instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. It was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus. . . If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth.<sup>45</sup>

Yet inspite of this affirmation of female ministerial talents, Ellen White did not encourage the church to ordain

---

<sup>44</sup> The Political Tensions at the Conference are referred to in a letter written by W. C. White to his wife Mary, Dec. 2, 1881 (General Conference Archives - WCW 1881 WE), p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Ellen White, Review and Herald (January 2, 1879) quoted in Evangelism, 471, 472.

women, nor did she accept the mantle of ordination herself when it was offered by church leadership. According to the testimony of her grandson, this refusal was based on the conviction that her "ordination was at the hand of God and not men." But she did accept ministerial credentials at the 1883 General Conference Session, and received the papers of ministerial ordination at the 1887 General Conference, while still refusing the "laying on of hands."<sup>46</sup>

In 1886 she again stressed the natural aptitude that women had for certain types of ministerial work, particularly for "Sabbath School" work, but still recommended that women not become "officeholders."<sup>47</sup> In the last decade of the nineteenth century Adventist women continued to receive mixed signals from the prophetess concerning the proper place that female ministry was to occupy in the church. On the one hand, Ellen White continued to refer to the ministry as a male domain, while attempting to convince women that their subordinate, and for the most part voluntary, role was vital in God's sight and not to be seen as a source of "discouragement." She assured them that the extra burdens they were forced to bear from the dual responsibilities of

---

<sup>46</sup> Arthur White, Ellen G. White" The Early Elmshaven Years (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publ. Asso., 1984), pp. 237, 377.

<sup>47</sup> Ellen White, Signs of the Times (Sept. 16, 1886), quoted in Welfare Ministry, pp. 164, 165.

voluntary Christian service, and domestic duties, would be offset by the fact that the "Saviour" would give these "self-sacrificing women a power that exceeds that of men."<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, Mrs. White called for a greater leadership role for women in the church, and advised individual females who raised questions about public ministry to "address the crowds whenever you can," to teach, counsel, and function as man's equal and "co-worker."<sup>49</sup> However, the most significant statement in the 1890's regarding female ministry, and the only instance where Ellen White specifically called for a form of woman's ordination, came in 1895. In the Review and Herald of July 9, she wrote,

Neither conference officer nor minister has a call from God to indulge distrust of God's power to use every individual who is considered a worthy member of the church. This conscientiousness, so-called, is retarding almost every line of the Lord's work. God can and will use those who have not had a thorough education in the schools of men . . . If ministers and men in positions of authority will get out of the way, and let the Holy Spirit move upon the minds of the lay brethren, God will direct them . . . Women who are willing to

---

<sup>48</sup> Ellen White, Letter 54, 1899 quoted in Evangelism, 461; See also, "the Lord Has a Work for Women," Welfare Ministry, 145.

<sup>49</sup> Ellen White, 1897 statement, Medical Ministry 60, 61; see Margit Suring, "Reflections on the Ordination of Women" (Unpublished Manuscript, Loma Linda University Heritage Room, 1975) 19; see also Letter 54, 1899 addressed to Mrs. S.M.I. Henry, Ellen White Estate.



consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor. Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work. Place the burdens upon men and women of the church, that they may grow by reason of the exercise, and thus become effective agents in the hand of the Lord for the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness.<sup>50</sup>

Yet even in this call for ordination there is a paradox. While she is saying that the gifts of every human being, male or female, are to be used fully to proclaim the Gospel by word, and to minister both privately and publicly, she fails to advocate full ministerial ordination for women who are deemed to be divinely called to such a work by the church. Rather, she suggests a limited form of ordination for women which would entitle them to a limited role in ministry, a position which came to be known as "Bible Instructor." This ministry which focused on personal evangelism and nurture was strongly promoted by Ellen White. Referring to this specialized form of pastoral work, she stated, in 1898, that "there are women who should labor in the gospel ministry. In many respects they would do more

---

<sup>50</sup> Ellen White, Review and Herald (July 9, 1895) 271.

good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God."<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately the church took advantage of this counsel by placing many women in such positions on a voluntary basis, exploiting their talents to the maximum with little recognition and no remuneration.

By the turn of the century Ellen White spoke out against this practice arguing that women should not be denied professional status simply because of their sex. During the final fifteen years of her life she seemed to be more committed to broadening opportunities for women in the church, but, right up until her death in 1915, she refused to support full ministerial ordination for women or accept the "laying on of hands" herself. However, when church leaders raised questions about the cost and wisdom of paying wages to women who worked as Bible instructors, Ellen White responded by defending these ladies who were doing the "neglected" ministerial work that was considered to be "not the most agreeable." In 1903 she stated, "this question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it."<sup>52</sup> She made it clear that "the Lord" had "shown" her, that "women teachers" were called of God just as surely as men, and that

---

<sup>51</sup> Ellen White, Manuscript Release, 43a, 1898 (Ellen White Estate).

<sup>52</sup> Ellen White, manuscript 142, 1903, quoted in Evangelism, 493.

their work should "command the hire of the laborer." She accused the conferences of "robbery" and "selfishly withholding from such workers their due," declaring, "do not let a few hard-working women do all the sacrificing." She also spoke out against the practice of not paying minister's wives who labored with their husbands. She warned that this "injustice" was discouraging women, and undermining the church's teaching that "God is a God of justice." Conference leaders who inquired where they were to find the budget to pay such women were told by Ellen White to use "tithe funds."<sup>53</sup>

In contrast to her absolute emphasis on child rearing and woman's domestic responsibilities throughout most of the nineteenth century, Ellen White opened the door to working mothers in her later years. Not only did she explicitly advise certain minister's wives to pursue the work of ministry rather than adopting one or two children "on whom to lavish their affection," but she even encouraged women with children to work outside the home and delegate their housework and child rearing to capable hands. In 1915, she wrote,

Seventh-day Adventists are not in any way to belittle women's work. If a woman puts her housework in the hands of a faithful, prudent helper, and leaves her children in good care,

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., see also, Evangelism, 491, 492 and Gospel Workers 452-453.

while she engages in the work, the conference should have wisdom to understand the justice of her receiving wages.<sup>54</sup>

Ellen White also strongly urged Adventist women to pursue careers as medical doctors. In 1910 she declared, "I am instructed that our sanitariums must have women physicians." However, the motivation for this progressive counsel was not so much the liberation of women as it was a concern for modesty and sexual propriety. Ellen White believed that "women should give treatment to women" in order to avoid "unnecessary" sexual "temptation." In a special statement written to workers at the Loma Linda Adventists Sanitarium in 1907, she said, "it is not in harmony with the instruction given at Sinai that gentlemen physicians should do the work of midwives. The Bible speaks of women at childbirth being attended by women, and thus it ought always to be." She argued that "women should be educated and trained to act skillfully as midwives and physicians to their sex," and proposed that the denomination build "a school where women can be educated by women physicians to do the best possible work in treating the diseases of women."<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Ellen White, 1915 statement, Gospel Workers, 452, 453; see also Letter 43a, 1898, manuscript release #330.

<sup>55</sup> Ellen White, Lessons for Sanitarium Workers (Nov. 11, 1907) 24; letter to brethren Ruble, Burden, and Evans, (May 7, 1911), pp. 569, 570; Medical Ministry, 61, 140.

Mrs. White lamented the "spirit of flirtation," the violations of "modesty" and the "frequent sexual indiscretions" that occurred at the sanitarium. She warned that male physicians were leaving themselves wide open to "subtle, dangerous temptations." "That which would be condemned in a worker of another class is supposed to be admissible in him. Thus a multitude of sins are covered up." She strongly expressed her concern that women were not being treated professionally at the sanitarium in respect to their sexual rights to privacy, or in the wages they were paid as employees.<sup>56</sup> This greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of women, which Ellen White demonstrated in the last two decades of her life, was most notable in the fields of medicine and the ministry.<sup>57</sup> Yet the question remains, why did she never encourage the ordination of women to full ministerial status in the church?

The answer to this question may be related to the strong attacks that the prophetess encountered after the turn of the century. She was denounced by several leading Adventists, who eventually left the church, for publicly publishing personal testimonies about them, without their

---

<sup>56</sup> Ellen White, "Special Testimonies," series B, No. 19, 35-37; see also Medical Ministry, 141.

<sup>57</sup> Other statements where she encouraged women to participate in ministerial work worthy of note are found in Review and Herald (January 15, 1901), 255; Evangelism, 1909 statements 471; Testimonies, VIII, 1904 statement, 299.

knowledge, that were in some cases proven to be untrue. Many of these men such as John Harvey Kellogg, and A.T. Jones, accused Ellen White of attempting to seize complete control of the denomination through her "inspired testimonies," which they saw as nothing more than manipulative actions designed to produce a form of dictatorial leadership.<sup>58</sup> In response to these accusations Ellen White wrote to Kellogg, denying the charges, in 1905. She said,

It is not right for you to suppose that I am striving to be first, striving for leadership... I want it to be understood that I have no ambition to have the name of leader, or any other name that may be given me, except that of a messenger of God. I claim no other name or position. My life and works speak for themselves.

In the light of such a statement, and the context in which it was given, it is not difficult to understand why Ellen White did not wish to seek the mantle of official ordination. Nor did she want to threaten male leadership in the church anymore than she had already managed to do through her prophetic pronouncements, by proposing full female ministerial ordination. It may be that Ellen White would not have sanctioned female ordination even under ideal circumstances for she believed that "Satan uses women more

---

<sup>58</sup> For a detailed account of these accusations, see, Daly, How Readest Thou, 67-89.

<sup>59</sup> Ellen White, letter 320 (To J.H. Kellogg), 1905.

successfully than he can men,"<sup>60</sup> but in the opinion of this researcher she would have been more likely to do so, if such a progressive change could have been made without appearing to be self-serving or potentially divisive to the church. The fact that she failed to take such a step sentenced Adventist women to more than a half a century of exclusion from the ordained ministry (a fate which still exists), and contributed to the frustrations of many women in the church who felt that their gifts were being stifled.

#### ADVENTIST WOMEN AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The unrest that currently exists for many Adventist women, who are impatient with the continuing refusal of the General Conference to open the doors of church leadership to them, and fully recognize their gifts,<sup>58</sup> was also evident in nineteenth century Adventism. In spite of the prophetic role that Ellen White was granted, and the more limited charismatic roles that were played by a small number of other females, the position of women in church leadership, between 1860 and 1925, was generally subordinate and steadily seemed to deteriorate. A decade ago the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference published a

---

<sup>60</sup> Ellen White, Ms. 29, 1911 (Nov. 17, 1911), 13.

<sup>61</sup> See, Adventist Woman (January, 1984); and Adventist Currents 1:4 (July 1984) 6, 7.

report which noted that "proportionately speaking" women held "fewer leadership positions in the SDA church" at that time than they had in the 1930's and 1940's.<sup>62</sup> This came as a surprise to those who do not recognize a direct correlation between the growth of hierarchical church structure, and the decline of female participation and lay involvement in the decision making processes of the church. But, this sociological truism has certainly been evident in Adventist history, as it has throughout the larger history of the Christian church.<sup>63</sup> The sociological evolution, which transformed the Advent movement into an organized denomination, and led it through the developmental stages of institutionalization bureaucratization, and hierarchicalism certainly affected the position that Adventist women occupied in the church during the 19th (and early 20th) century, and has obvious implications for the current controversy over woman's ordination in the church.

According to the lists of church officers, and the reports written in from the various local congregations, which appear in the Review and Herald, between 1860 and 1925, very few Adventist women occupied positions of

---

<sup>62</sup> Roles of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (A report prepared by the General Conference Biblical Research Office for the annual council, 1973) 15.

<sup>63</sup> See Rosemary Ruether, Religion and Sexism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) 150-183.



prominence either as local lay leaders or church administrators during this period. There were of course some significant exceptions, which John Beach has attempted to record in his patronizing Notable Women of Spirit,<sup>64</sup> but even these women were either unwilling or unable to successfully challenge the patriarchal nature of Adventism. In the first two decades of denominational existence as the church experienced rapid growth and relatively loose organizational structure, charismatic women such as Sarah Lindsey and Ellen Lane were allowed to carry on an effective, and evangelistic, public ministry. Lindsey, who worked with her husband in the New England states, spoke twenty-three times on the second coming of Christ, in a single series, at Pleasant Valley, New York. Ellen Lane, who was also a powerful preacher, on one occasion drew 650 people out to hear her speak at a meeting in Virginia, after her husband had been able to attract an audience of only 35 individuals the day before.<sup>65</sup> Both of these ladies were extremely successful in soul winning, demonstrating that

---

<sup>64</sup> John Beach, Notable Women of Spirit, (Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1976); the weaknesses of Beach's book have been elaborated in a review by Carol Richardson, see, Spectrum 13:2 (December 1982) 63, 64.

<sup>65</sup> See Review and Herald (June 15, 1869) 200; (February 27, 1870) 78; (February 24, 1874) 86; (August 3, 1876) 45, 54, 62, 70, 78; and Richard Schwarz, Light Bearers to the Remnant (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979) 135, 136.

gifted women were just as capable, if not more so, than gifted men when it came to preaching the gospel and doing the work of public evangelism.

Other Adventist women who rose to positions of prominence in the 1860's and '70's were Minerva Chapman, Angeline Cornell, Mary Haskell, Phebe Lamson, Jean McIntosh, Jennie Merriam, Hannah More, Roxie Rice, Maid Sisley, Jennie Trembley, and Adelia Van Horn. Chapman, who may have been the most gifted of these women, served simultaneously as treasurer of the General Conference, and editor of the Youth's Instructor. More and Sisley became well known missionaries to Africa and Switzerland. Rice and Haskell served as the first president and vice president of the vigilant missionary society (which later became the home missionary department of the G.C.). Merriam and Trambley edited church periodicals for youth. McIntosh contributed a great deal to the Sabbath School work through her creative designs for children's supplies. Cornell was a gifted speaker who laid the foundation for the Woman's Bible Instruction work, and Lamson became the first female physician in the Adventist Church, in 1866.<sup>66</sup> But even these women, whose accomplishments managed to achieve some

---

<sup>66</sup> The historical contributions of these women are mentioned by alphabetical listing in Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (Washington: Review and Herald, 1966); see also Mervyn Maxwell, Tell it to the World (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1977), pp. 184-193; and Beach.

historical significance, occupied secondary roles in relationship to male leadership, and generally served with little recognition. In most cases they worked either without wages, or for salaries that were significantly less than what men were receiving in comparable positions. Their efforts testified to the effective work that women could do, in positions of responsibility, when given the opportunity, but even in the early decades before church organization became highly institutionalized, such opportunities were not equal or plentiful for Adventist women.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, it became somewhat expedient for Adventist leadership to draw on the talents of available women, in order to provide an adequate work force, to meet the ever increasing demands of a denomination that was by this time experiencing unparalleled growth.<sup>67</sup> In both of these decades Adventists doubled their world membership, a feat that would not be accomplished in any succeeding decade, and relied more heavily on the leadership abilities of women than in any other period in the church's history, due to the shortage of available males. In his summary of "significant women" in Adventist history (from the 1840's to the 1960's) nearly half of the 97 women mentioned by Beach made their

---

<sup>67</sup> Bureau of census, Religious Bodies: 1906, 514; quoted in Schwarz, 151, 351-53.

greatest impact during the decades of the 1880's and 1890's.<sup>68</sup> The most influential among these names, besides Ellen White, include the following: Dr. Kate Lindsay, Sojourner Truth, and Serepta M. Henry. Dr. Kate Lindsay was not only a physician and founder of the first Adventist training school for nurses, but, established herself as an outspoken feminist who challenged male dominance at every turn, and "rebelled against the restrictions placed upon women." Sojourner Truth, the great abolitionist, feminist and freedom fighter of the nineteenth century, spent the final years of her life ministering in the Adventist Community in Battle Creek. She was a close friend of J.H. Kellogg, John Byington, and other prominent Adventists. She was reportedly baptized into the Adventist church by Uriah Smith before her death and burial in Battle Creek in 1883.<sup>69</sup> But whether this persistent tradition about her baptism is true or not, she did exercise a tremendous influence over Adventists in the early 1880's.

A third woman, who made a profound impact both inside and outside of Adventism in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, was Serepta M. Henry. Henry was a

---

<sup>68</sup> Beach, 111-116.

<sup>69</sup> For a discussion of the pro and con evidenc concerning whether Truth was baptized in the Battle Creek Tabernacle, or if she had her funeral services there, see SDA Encyclopedia, 1331, 1332.

self-described crusader for "woman's ministry," and a temperance lecturer who achieved national prominence with the WCTU. She became an Adventist in 1896, and continued her work in behalf of moral education, women and children, until her death in 1900. Her addresses given at the 1899 General Conference rank with the most memorable in denominational history. Fannie Bolton and Marian Davis also made important contributions during this period through their work as editorial assistants to Ellen White. Bolton finally became disillusioned with the job, due to the fact that she felt she received almost no recognition for the tremendous amount of creative labor she put into the books and articles that went out under Mrs. White's name. She had many disputes with the prophetess, and believed she was guilty of plagerism, but still made valuable contributions particularly before their relationship degenerated. Davis, on the other hand, demonstrated an absolute, unquestioning loyalty to Ellen White, while working endless hours to prepare her manuscripts for publications. She too, received very little recognition, but her personality did not require it. However, Mrs. White did refer to her as her "bookmaker" and greatly benefitted from her contributions. Other women, who occupied more official, administrative positions in the church at this time were, Martha Byington, Sarah Peck, C.H. Jones, Mary Sim lin, E.E. Jellogg, and Jessie Waggoner.

Byington was the first president of the Dorcas Society. Peck was the co-founder of the first SDA College outside North America and an author of various textbooks. Jones and Waggoner were secretaries of the General Conference Sabbath School Association, and co-editors of The Sabbath School Worker. Simkin served as the secretary of the General Conference Religious Liberty Department in the 1890's , and Kellogg was the secretary-treasurer of the American Health and Temperance Society.

Several of the positions which were assigned to these women, particularly those in the General Conference, would be occupied almost exclusively by men in the twentieth century, due to the rapid acceleration of the institutionalization in the church. As the various departments grew, and more responsibilities were heaped upon the individuals in charge of these departments, women generally disappeared from all leadership spots. The only limited exception to this rule of complete male dominance in high leadership positions occurred during the years of the first World War when there was a shortage of available male leadership. But, with the return of men from the wars, women were again squeezed out of the higher positions of responsibility. As one might expect, after the reorganization of the General Conference, in 1901, which laid a much broader framework for the growth of bureaucracy, and the monopoly of denominational politics by

the ordained clergy, lay persons were given only a token voice in the operation of the church, and women were subordinated to an increasingly greater degree.<sup>70</sup> It is also evident that charismatic female leaders, who were gifted speakers, but not denominational employees had a much greater influence in nineteenth century Adventism, than they did after the turn of the century. From a practical standpoint then, the growth of organization and institutional structure had a very detrimental effect on both female leadership and the involvement of the laity in the general decision making processes of the church.

When we turn to the question of theology, as it affected the role of Adventist women in the church, denominational leadership was faced with the dilemma of trying to explain the texts which charged women to "keep silent in church," in a way that would not contradict their fundamentalist view of Scripture, or their belief that Ellen White was a divinely chosen prophetess. Unlike many of the Sectarian and Fundamentalist churches, which took these texts quite literally and expected other conservative

---

<sup>70</sup> A comparison between the administrative positions held by women in nineteenth century and twentieth century Adventism demonstrates this decline in female leadership. see, listings of female leaders in SDA Encyclopedia and Beach, 111-116.

Christians to do the same,<sup>71</sup> Adventists attempted to justify their acceptance of the "visionary statements" of Mrs. White by reinterpreting the passages that denounced female leadership, while clinging to a "proof text," fundamentalist approach to scripture. There are more than 15 articles which appear in the Review and Herald, that specifically address the controversial prohibitions against women in I Corinthians 14 and I Timothy 2, in the nineteenth century alone.

Several of these articles appeal to a number of "seemingly contradictory" passages in the Bible which emphasize the teaching authority, and leadership abilities, of various women. The examples of Miriam, Deborah, and Hulda were quoted by Uriah Smith and other male authors, as proof from the old Testament to substantiate the church's claim that a woman could occupy positions of authority, and the evidence offered from the New Testament was considered to be much more overwhelming. Church leaders emphasized the fact that the "promise of the spirit was as much to the female as male disciples of Jesus," and that the power and

---

<sup>71</sup> Judging from the following articles in the Review, which refer to various sects and churches which applied these texts in I Cor. 14:34,35 and I Tim. 2:11,12 to nineteenth century women in a very literal way, Adventists seemed to find themselves in a bit of a defensive position on the subject, see R&H (February 23, 1860) 109; (June 26, 1866), 28; and "Shall Women Speak in Church?" R&H 37 (March 14, 1871)



authority given at Pentecost did not discriminate between the sexes. Using many of the arguments that Phoebe Palmer and other non-Adventists had popularized, men like James White, S.C. Welcome, Uriah Smith, and others exalted the accomplishments of Mary, who first testified to the risen Christ, Anna the prophetess, Philip's four daughters, and the women such as Phebe, Irenia, and Priscilla who "labored in the gospel" with Paul. They argued that the Apostle could not possibly have forbidden women to pray, preach and prophesy in any general sense, when he had given them directions to do these very things himself. Adventist readers were informed that criticisms which came against the church for allowing a woman to exercise authority, could be answered with the "precious promise" that "there is neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus."<sup>72</sup>

However, in spite of such liberating statements, these men generally did not dismiss the restrictions placed upon women in scripture, in terms of their contemporary application, nor did they normally leave the impression that women had achieved a full freedom or equality in the Gospel

---

<sup>72</sup> See "On Keeping Silence," R&H (December 16, 1858) 27; B.F. Robbins, "To the Female Disciples in the Third Angel's Message," R&H (December 8, 1859) 21, 22; S.C. Welcome, "Shall The Woman Keep Silence In the Churches?" R&H (February 23, 1860) 109-110; Uriah Smith, "Let Your Women Keep Silence In the Churches," R&H (June 26, 1866) 28; James White, "Women in the Church," R&H (May 29, 1879) 172; G.W. Morse, "Women in the Church," R&H (February 28, 1888) 11; "Women Laboring in Public," R&H (August 8, 1871) 53.

of Jesus Christ.

In their efforts to explain exactly what the Bible did mean, when it instructed women to "keep silent" and "not to usurp authority over the man," church spokesmen offered a number of different interpretations. One argued that these passages were an "obvious" reference to the frivolous and "troublesome asking of questions" which uninformed women seemed prone to in religious meetings, and suggested that the Apostle rightly counseled them to keep quiet in public, and to be properly instructed by their husbands in private. Another interpretation stressed the view that Paul was addressing highly unusual "irregularities" in the churches, that had special importance to the congregations addressed, but no universal application. M. M. Osgood echoed the view of Adam Clarke, that Paul was referring to the practice of "dictating in assemblies" which had carried over into some of the Christian churches from the Jewish synagogues. But the most popular argument, which appeared in the Review, was the interpretation that emphasized the Apostle's condemnation of dominating and aggressive women, while stressing that this instruction did not apply to humble women who spoke in public. One writer believed that Paul was "rebuking" females who possessed "more self-esteem and haughty pride than religion or good sense," and who attempted to exercise authority over any man (including their own husbands). Paul's argument that woman was

subordinate to man, due to the "fact" that "Adam was first formed" and the woman was "deceived" and "first in transgression" was quoted with approval.

One editorial commented, that "offensive" and "scandalous" women "who usurp authority over men, and become dictatorial in public assemblies, are very much out of place, but that does not prove it improper" for many woman to speak in an appropriate manner. Another editorial response asserted that Paul was not forbidding women to preach, nor insisting on her "subjection to man" or that she be consigned "to a degrading position." Rather, he was promoting "subjection to that rule which the Lord had ordained as order and propriety in his church," and according to this writer, such a "principle" was still valid in the present.<sup>73</sup> But, not surprisingly, the strongest commentary on "women's silence," was provided in an editorial by James White, who attempted to directly apply the Apostles words to the "abominable" teachings of the woman's rights movement and its "worst" exponents. In 1879

---

<sup>73</sup> S. C. Welcome, "Shall the Women Keep Silence," R&H (February 23, 1860) 110; N. J. Bowers, "May Women Publicly Labor in the Cause of Christ?" R&H (June 14, 1881) 4; Uriah Smith, "Let Your Women Keep Silence . . .," R&H (June 26, 1866) 28; M. M. Osgood, "Extracts from the Writings of the Learned," R&H (January 24, 1871) 47; "Questions By Brother McDonald," R&H (April 22, 1862) 164; "Shall Women Speak in the Church?" R&H (March 14, 1871); "Woman's Position," R&H (October 25, 1892) 8; see also, George Starr, "Does Paul Contradict Himself?" R&H (December 16, 1880).

he stated, "There were those women, doubtless, in the apostle's day as well as in ours, who could prate about 'woman's rights' as glibly, if not as filthily, as the notorious Victoria Woodhull."<sup>74</sup>

For White, and most of the males who controlled church organization, there was a limited place for gifted women leaders to occupy in the church, but women in general were expected to observe the "God ordained subjection," that undermined any hope of genuine equality. Adventist theology, concerning the proper role of women, managed to nicely justify the denomination's teaching regarding the gifts of Ellen White, but failed to promote full sexual equality in Christ. It was this tension of belonging to a church that, on the one hand, could give such a prominent place to a woman while on the other hand, it denied opportunities to women in general, which produced frustrations and difficult adjustments, not only for some of the most gifted Adventist women, but for many among the "Rank and File" as well. The experiences of Angeline Andrews, Sarepta Henry, and late Lindsay serve to illustrate this point, and therefore deserve special attention.

Angeline Andrews was not a woman who achieved any kind of position or fame that recorded her name in the history

---

<sup>74</sup> James White, "Women in the Church," R&H (May 29, 1879) 172.

books. She was a dedicated housewife and mother, like so many other Adventist women of her day. We would probably know very little, if anything, about her today, had it not been for the fact that she kept a rather detailed diary (a common practice for women in the nineteenth century) which was somehow preserved in its handwritten form. And although it is not the easiest document to read, it does contain valuable material which reflects the kinds of struggles and frustrations that were no doubt typical of many Adventist women who tried to be committed Christians in spite of the difficulties they encountered. Angeline was the wife of J. N. Andrews, a well known Adventist preacher, and her diary covers the years between 1859 and 1870. During these years she raised her two children, and she turned 40 years old shortly before the diary ends.

The diary begins and ends with her husband, John, gone on church business. Due to the fact that he traveled a great deal, and was preoccupied with "the Lord's work" when he wasn't on the road, Angeline found herself struggling with the "weariness" of household duties, and trying to properly care for a "baby and a 5 year old" with very little opportunity to just relax or establish personal space. Her "loneliness" for adult companionship coupled with the "loss of independence" that she felt from the constant drain of her "motherly activities," left her "tired," "feeling sick,"

and hurting in terms of her personal needs.<sup>75</sup> In the 1860's she complained that, "the want in my heart remains unfulfilled" and spoke freely about the "difficulty" she was experiencing in attempting to "submit" to the "Lord's Call," which constantly left her alone with the kids. On various occasions she describes herself as feeling "depressed," "disappointed," "anxious in heart," "miserable" and "heavy-hearted", but often ends such entries with the self resigning phrase, "I must submit."<sup>76</sup>

What makes these self revelations so interesting is the fact that outwardly Angeline was a very positive and productive person who seemed to accomplish a great deal. However, her motivation for doing so was that this was what God expected of her as a self-sacrificing mother and wife, and not that such a vocation brought her personal joy and fulfillment. On several occasions she mentioned controversies in the church over Ellen White's role, the authority of her visions, and the question of women being allowed to speak in church. She did not believe that the visions of the prophetess should be given absolute authority, as some of her fellow Adventists did, but she did

---

<sup>75</sup> Angeline Andrews, Diary of Mrs. Angeline Stevens Andrews Starting in 1859" (Handwritten manuscript, Heritage Room Loma Linda University Library, 1859) 9-11, 43, 72, 90, 125.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 9, 39, 80-82, 90, 111, 118.

seem to agree with the view that women had the right to speak or preach in church. To what degree she wished to be involved in such a ministry herself is not clear, but she does definitely indicate that the secondary role of minister's wife, housekeeper, and mother, was not an easy lot.<sup>77</sup> One can only speculate as to how applicable her experience and feelings were for Adventist women in general, but judging from the discrepancy between her outward actions, and her expressed frustrations, it seems likely that many "good Adventist mothers" felt similar tensions about their "God ordained" roles in life.

The case of Sarepta Henry is very different from Angeline Andrews, but still gives some helpful insights into the experience of women in nineteenth century Adventism, and is particularly valuable because it provides a candid female perspective on Adventist church leadership. Henry was an individualist who did not let her prominence in the WCTU deter her from converting to Adventism, a denomination which was not always popular with the WCTU or the mainline churches, in her later years. She only worked within the Adventist church for five years, but made a profound impact during that period (1896-1900). Not only did she encourage Adventist women to give their unreserved support to the WCTU, and to enter into the various moral reform movements

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 17, 19, 28, 69, 105.

of the day that particularly benefitted women and children, but she was surprisingly vocal in her criticism of church leadership and her warnings against the over reliance on Ellen White, which she saw as a stifling problem in the church.

Her addresses and comments at the 1899 General Conference session are of particular interest in this regard. She was, no doubt, chosen to speak because of her national reputation, but the "brethren" may have regretted that decision after hearing what she had to say. Henry accused church leaders of stifling the work of the Holy Spirit by failing to properly utilize the gifts of all members of the church. She warned against the "danger of spiritual paralysis" in the ministry, and Administrative levels of leadership, stating, "our brethren have seemed to be crippled." Henry noted, that, "for some reason the gospel has never gone as it ought to have gone." That reason, in her opinion, was directly related to the denomination's extreme dependence on Mrs. White's counsels, which were so difficult to obtain while she was in Australia (1890-1900), and the hesitancy of the church to use the full potential of "woman's ministry."<sup>78</sup> She was not an advocate of ordaining women to the Gospel ministry, like her

---

<sup>78</sup> Sarepta Henry, The Diary Bulletin of the General Conference (March 7, 1899 172.



friend and associate, Francis Willard, but she did believe that women in their homes and through their efforts to reform society, held the moral destiny of America in their hands. Unlike most other Adventists she was unwilling to elevate the influence of one woman to the level of extreme authority, while neglecting and ignoring the wealth of gifts which women as a whole possessed in the church. One of her statements in this regard, addressed to the General Conference deserves to be quoted in full, because of its contemporary significance for Adventism.

When a question comes up which ought to be settled quickly, under the influence of the Spirit of God, upon principle, instead of practicing self-denial, instead of bringing yourself up to the point of consecration and that earnest self-surrender to God which would bring you to the place in which you could yourself see, in the light of the Spirit, just what to do with that case, you think, 'well, we will get help through Sister White,' and then you just leave it. You lay the burden off on her, instead of carrying it yourself.

I do not think this is fair. I want to make an appeal to my brethren right here. I want to exhort you earnestly to bring yourselves up to the point from which you can settle every personal question yourself; and when every personal question is settled, you will come together in conference, and be able to settle conference questions. I know that this is the privilege of every one of us. God is no respecter of persons, and he is perfectly willing to give that measure of the Holy Spirit to every one of his servants that will enable them to see clearly, so that we shall not be obliged to wait, as I said the other evening, six weeks to get an answer from the Lord.

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 171.

Interestingly enough, there is no record that any of the male delegates who received this strong bit of counsel, took it upon themselves to inform Mrs. Henry, that it was not right for a woman to "exhort her brethren" in a public assembly. Sare, as her friends called her, was a strong instrument of the Lord.

However, the strongest female personality to grace the church membership roles of Adventism, between 1865 and 1925, was probably Kate Lindsay. Kate was not the type to accept male dominance. As a student in one of the first co-educational med schools, she gained notariaty, by discouraging overly aggressive, would be, suitors with a louded pearl-handled pistol, which she kept on her person.<sup>80</sup> When professors at the University of Michigan who complained that admitting women into medicine "lowered the standards," vowed to make academic life intolerable for "the girls," Kate responded by outscoring the best men in her class in the first semester exams. She later graduated at the top of her class. She was also an able debater in behalf of woman's rights and suffrage, but her most significant contributions in the Adventist church came in the field of education, and research. She had a strong burden that women should have full opportunities to receive

---

<sup>80</sup> Kathryn Jenson Nelson, Kate Lindsay, M.D.  
(Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1963) 60.

the best possible education, and therefore founded the first Adventist School of Nursing, at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. Later she established another School of Nursing in 1897 during a three year period of mission service in Africa. She spent the last 22 years of her life teaching potential nurses, many of whom would follow in her footsteps and become physicians.<sup>81</sup>

Kate Lindsay, like Sare Henry, dared to demonstrate that the capabilities of women were not inferior to those of men. In an age when Adventists were still strong fundamentalists,<sup>82</sup> who looked with suspicion on the modernist trends in education and those who sought professional careers, Lindsay was a pioneer who had the foresight to recognize that the future was in the hands of those who would attain an education, be they male or female. She knew that the future of the Adventist Church would be greatly dependant upon its ability to provide all levels of education for its young people.

During the last fifty years Adventists have in many ways outgrown and matured beyond their Fundamentalist roots,

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 62-69, 137f.

<sup>82</sup> Adventists remained firm fundamentalists throughout most of the 1920's. The following two articles demonstrate both Adventist opposition to modernism and its support for fundamentalism, see, "Mistakes of Modernism," Signs of the Times 52 (1925) 8ff; and "The Christian Fundamentalists," Signs of the Times 13 (1921) 6ff.

yet the church still retains many of its Fundamentalist sectarian qualities. The factors most responsible for the changes which have occurred are 1) the shift in Adventist thinking concerning education, particularly higher education; and 2) the trend towards professionalization in the church.

Even in the nineteenth century Adventists demonstrated a strong commitment to Christian education, by providing an alternative school system which they considered to be preferable to the secularized public schools. However, these schools were not accredited nor able to academically compete with accredited educational institutions. As the church grew and became better able to support its schools in the twentieth century, its attitude towards higher education changed. And while there are still Adventists who view higher education with great suspicion, recent studies indicate that a majority of Adventist parents believe that a child needs to have a college education to get along in today's world.<sup>83</sup> Not only do Adventists believe this, they also practice it. In 1975 the church operated over 4,000 schools including seventy-three colleges and two

---

<sup>83</sup> Charles Crider, The Seventh-day Adventist Family: An Empirical Study (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979) 164.

universities.<sup>84</sup> There is no other Christian denomination in America which educates a higher percentage of its members on all levels than Adventists do. Therefore, it is not suprising that a much higher percentage of Adventists work in white collar or professional occupations (fifty-five percent) as compared to the national average (forty-two percent).<sup>85</sup>

This professionalization of the church has especially affected women. In the nineteenth century nearly all Adventist mothers were rural homemakers or housewives who were not employed outside the home. Today less than twenty percent of Adventist women in North America are housewives who are not employed outside the home.<sup>86</sup> In spite of this change there seems to still be a surprisingly low divorce rate in the church (7.4 percent) and a relative absence of marital conflict over domestic duties relating to sex roles - who does the housework, cooking, etc. (Only 2.7 percent of SDA husbands and wives consider this to be a major source of marital conflict).<sup>87</sup>

Attitudes concerning sexual equality and equal

---

<sup>84</sup> Robin Theobald, "The Seventh-day Adventist Moment: A Sociological Study" (Ph.D. dissertation photocopied in Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library, 1979) 2.

<sup>85</sup> Crider, 152.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 195, 203.

opportunities for women are also changing in the church. Adventist students at Loma Linda University, who have participated in random studies and responded to questions relating to the subject of equality for women, have scored very close to the national averages on these issues,<sup>88</sup> and have very strongly favored the ordination of women to the Adventist ministry. However, the problem of sex typing continues particularly on the levels of high church and educational administration, and to a lesser degree in the medical professions in the Adventist denomination.<sup>89</sup> The above mentioned socio-cultural factors still contribute to this problem in the church. But the most obvious discriminatory practice, against women, is the refusal to ordain qualified females to the Gospel ministry, which

---

<sup>88</sup> According to a 1981 study conducted by the Office of Student Affairs (LLU-LSC) ninety-four percent of female SDA college students said women should have opportunities for full job equality compared to ninety-six percent on the U.S. National Level. Adventist male students scored 87.7 percent compared to an 88.4 percent national average in the U.S.A. among college males. When LLU-LSC students were asked if women should be ordained to the Adventist ministry 74.6 percent of the women said yes, 67.7 of the men agreed.

<sup>89</sup> See Roscoe Swan, Questionnaire regarding Women Employees in Adventist Higher Education (Study done in conjunction with his doctoral dissertation - Heritage Room Loma Linda University LSC). Jan Daffern, "How long must Adventist Women Wait?" Spectrum 14:2, 1983, 39-43. Eugenia Carpenter, Women in Male Dominated Health Professions (unpublished manuscript Loma Linda University LSC Heritage Room, 1974), pp. Appendix A.

eliminates them from the highest levels of church leadership. This policy remains as a besmirchment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSIONS, QUESTIONS AND APPLICATIONS

When one seriously examines the cultural practice and thought which typified American society between 1850 and 1925, it becomes obvious that it was not only an era of extreme social transition and ideological change, but an age filled with remarkable contrasts. Nineteenth century America was a nation struggling to retain its protestant identity. Its victorian values bore very little resemblance to the pluralistic beliefs and practices, which characterize our contemporary culture. To take the writings of any nineteenth century figure, on any subject, and to apply them without qualification or any attempt to understand them in their proper historical context is not only grossly unfair to the original writer, but it is potentially harmful to the modern reader.

In this study we have specifically attempted to explore the role that Adventist women occupied in the church, in relationship to the life and teachings of Ellen White, and the broader American culture of the day. The evidence, as I see it, suggests two broad deductions and raises a number of specific questions. First, it seems evident that Ellen White's views and visionary pronouncements concerning womanhood and sexual roles, were not inerrant nor were they generally unique and original. Rather, her writings, on



this subject, like so many others, often reflected various popular notions that were based on theories which are rejected today. The positions she advocated were neither extreme, nor surprising, when compared to the teachings of her fellow social reformers.

Secondly, the evidence suggests that Ellen White's writings on the subject of womanhood were at times given unrealistic authority by the church. Although, generally they were helpful and relevant to her Adventist contemporaries, demonstrating an increasing concern for the needs of women and providing them with positive counsel, it still must be acknowledged that her views were certainly fallible and should have been treated that way.

Is it possible that Adventism's fundamentalist view of inspiration, which claimed that a prophet was either totally reliable or false, inflate the importance of her writings? Did such a view give her testimonies a disproportional influence in the Adventist community during her lifetime, and after her death, which produced some unfortunate consequences for women in the church? If so, this could help to explain why Ellen White was not seen as a gifted female who demonstrated the possible potential that women in general possessed, as instruments of God, but rather was placed in a separate category from all other members of her sex. It could also help us understand why her visionary and prophetic gifts did not open new doors for women, but served

to isolate her from the experience of her Adventist sisters.

The evidence which suggests that she promoted an ideal for women that sometimes contradicted the lifestyle that she modeled as a mother, wife and minister, might be explained or excused on the grounds that she was not just a woman, but a prophetess. As Sare Henry pointed out, the church came to expect too much from her. She was idealized and elevated in such a manner, that at times both the prophetess and the denomination suffered from this unhealthy dependency. While there can be little doubt that she was a tremendously committed, dedicated, and gifted woman, she was nevertheless human and subjected to intense pressures, produced to some degree by the absolute view of prophecy that Adventists maintained. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that she displayed normal human defense mechanisms, when she was attacked, or accused of being a false prophet, by those who became disturbed by errors in her testimonies. Others, who went to the opposite extreme of idolatry, created an adventist icon, and were responsible for projecting on Ellen White an authority which provided specific answers to the question that was posed at the outset of this study. Namely, why has the Adventist church been so slow to accept a prominent role for women in church leadership when the most prominent and influential figure in Adventist history was a woman?

The answer to this question might be found by examining the intimate relationship between the prophetic pronouncements of Ellen White, and Adventism's roots in the nineteenth century concepts of domesticity and separate sexual spheres, ruralism, victorianism, socio-political lethargy, and fundamentalism. The following five, specific conclusions provide an elaboration on each of these points.

1. Ellen White's strong belief that God had ordained women to occupy a sacred domestic sphere, which was separate from the work of men and subordinate to the authority of men, fit perfectly with nineteenth century sentimentalist and domestic literature, and profoundly influenced Adventists in the earliest years of the movement, to adopt the credo that a woman's place was in the home.

The "cult of true womanhood" which flourished in American culture between 1820 and 1860, canonized the role of mother, and placed a "guilt trip" on women who did not measure up to the ideal. This theory which taught that women were naturally more spiritual than men, though inferior in most other ways, had great appeal to Ellen White. She freely quoted many of the leading advocates of this philosophy, who maintained that the moral destiny of the world was in the hands of Christian mothers. In turn, her influence on Adventists cannot be overestimated. Church periodicals between 1850 and 1925 layed a tremendous domestic burden on Adventist women. And in spite of the evidence

that Ellen White failed to model this domestic ideal in her own life, Adventist mothers even today, often struggle with a great deal of anxiety and guilt when they find themselves in conflict with her testimonies, pursuing careers outside the home and away from their children. Towards the end of her life Mrs. White recommended that a mother should feel free to find good child care in order to do full time church work. This contradicted her general teaching of a lifetime, but it harmonized with her own practice at home, and might serve to help relieve the guilt of gifted women, today, who work outside the home.

2. One of the main reasons that Adventists have clung to the domestic ideals for women, longer than other protestants, has been because the church has often tended to glorify the benefits of rural living while it has simultaneously warned against urban life. This commitment to ruralism which characterized the movement particularly in the nineteenth century was again related to the writings of Ellen White, which instructed Adventists to stay out of the cities, and particularly advised mothers to keep their daughters in a rural environment.

While it is true that Protestants in general associated urbanization with the moral degeneration of America, in the nineteenth century, this study has shown that Adventism's rejection of city life went far beyond the protestant norm,

for three reasons. First, the Advent Movement began as a rural outgrowth of Millerism and remained as a religious group made up almost exclusively of farmers and self employed rural workers, well into the 1860s. Secondly, Ellen White warned Adventists to stay out of the cities in order to avoid the hardships and persecutions which she believed would be directed against "Sabbath keepers" during the "time of trouble". Finally, the emergence of the "modern woman" in the cities, who wore fashionable dress, indulged in "wordly amusements," and was considered to be the source of sexual temptation, led Ellen White to warn Adventists against a host of urban evils. Her condemnation of practices such as theater attendance, the wearing of cosmetics, jewelry, fashionable dress, etc. which were associated with prostitution in the nineteenth century have often been arbitrarily applied by modern Adventists without understanding the historical context of her original statements. But, the rural nature of Adventism certainly did reinforce the denomination's belief in domesticity, and served to retard egalitarian tendencies in the church, and perpetuate woman's subordination.

3. Victorian concepts of sexuality, which in many ways contributed to myths concerning female inequality, profoundly influenced the thinking of Ellen White, and John Harvey Kellogg, who were the leading Adventist spokespersons on the subject of sex. Their acceptance of vitalistic theories,

which enjoyed great popularity in the nineteenth century, led Adventists to accept a number of sexual stereotypes that were harmful to women.

Ellen White taught that "vital force" was the life giving power from God, which prevented disease, and perpetuated human existence. She believed that each individual was given a limited quantity of this vital energy, which when depleted would result in death, and that women were given less than men. This made women more vulnerable to disease, and associated their sex with misconceptions of natural female weakness. It also attributed "animalistic tendencies" to men, who were thought to be much more passionate, and basically incapable of controlling themselves if subjected to sexual temptation. Therefore, women were generally held responsible for sexual immorality, being the source of temptation, and were singled out for blame when the "social purity" of America seemed to be threatened in the process of urbanization. Faulty theories concerning sexuality also led Adventists to adopt many negative views concerning sex, such as their phobia concerning masturbation, and their failure to affirm the importance of sexual pleasure in marriage. However, these ideas were not unusual in Victorian America.

Many modern Adventist publications have directly applied these views of Ellen White, to the contemporary church as if they were written in the 1980's, in spite of

the fact that current medical knowledge contradicts much of what Mrs. White and Dr. Kellogg taught concerning women and sexual attitudes. A classic example of this is Joe Cruz's recent book, entitled Creeping Compromise, which speaks against a range of activities from females wearing pantsuits to mixed swimming. He, like many other contemporary Adventists, echoes victorian arguments concerning female responsibility for sexual immorality.

4. Adventism's strong pre-millennialism, and its suspicion of socio-political involvements reinforced by Ellen White, also contributed to the movement's tendency to place women in a subordinated position. The denomination's opposition to woman's rights and suffrage grew out of its pessimistic view of history, and the prophetic pronouncements of Ellen White which denounced feminism as incompatible with true Christianity.

This study has demonstrated conclusively that Adventists, like many other conservative christians, were committed to major social reforms such as abolitionism and prohibitionism. However, unlike some of the conservative holiness churches Adventists did not support the social Gospel Movement. As a general rule, Seventh-day Adventists strongly supported causes such as health reform, or temperance, which were directly related to personal ethics, but rejected the notion that Christianity was inseparable from the great causes of social ethics. The major exception

to this rule was Adventism's radical Abolitionism. It seems quite paradoxical that a movement which refused to support the "Social Gospel," and rejected the crusade for woman's rights, on the grounds that these causes were hopeless attempts to transform a world which was beyond transformation, would not apply the same logic to the issue of slavery. There is an inconsistency here which Adventists resolved in a negative way, in the twentieth century. Instead of recognizing that the Gospel of Jesus Christ breaks down the barriers of injustice relating to class and sex as well as race, the church simply abandoned the cause of race, by avoiding involvement in the Civil Right Movement. The resistance to political activism, among Adventists, can again, be largely traced to the testimonies of Ellen White. However, the Adventist tendency to shun political participation, and look with suspicion on the woman's rights movement, based on "prophetic counsel," does a disservice to the prophetess and the Gospel.

5. A final factor which prevented Adventist women from fully utilizing their gifts, or achieving any kind of full equality within the movement, was the denomination's deep Fundamentalist roots. While Adventists refused to ordain women as Gospel ministers, based on the counsel of Ellen White, they granted to the prophetess the highest position of church leadership and authority.

In spite of the fact that Ellen White refused to hold



official church office, or to receive the laying on of hands which normally accompanied ordination, she did receive the full benefits of ministerial ordination and carried the credentials of an ordained minister. She also acted the part of an ordained minister in terms of preaching and exercising more authority in the church than any other person. This fact caused various Fundamentalists to denounce Adventists for allowing a woman to teach, preach, and usurp authority over males, because such behavior was thought to be in violation of I Timothy 2 and I Corinthians 14. Adventists resolved this dilemma by affirming their Fundamentalist belief in the literal and absolute authority of Scripture, conceding that Paul did condemn the practice of women exercising authority over men, but claimed prophetic exemption for Ellen White, who was not exercising her own authority but God's authority. The church defended Ellen White's position, but stood in opposition to the various protestant churches which began to ordain women ministers in the nineteenth century. Adventist women such as Angeline Andrews, Sare Henry and Kate Lindsay expressed their frustration concerning the general subordination of women, in different ways, but the church has continued to pursue a course of sexual inequality even in the present. The irony of Adventism, that the same denomination which has so honored and elevated the gifts of a single woman could simultaneously refuse to recognize the gifts of its women in

general still persists today. To positively resolve this conflict by properly acknowledging the full equality that women already possess through Jesus Christ, is one of the great contemporary challenges facing the Adventist Church.

## APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

BEYOND ORDINATION: SEXUAL INEQUALITY  
AND TOKENISM IN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

by  
Steven Daily

A paper first presented to  
The Association of Adventist Women  
in Loma Linda, California  
on October 16, 1983

Beyond Ordination: Sexual Inequality  
And Tokenism in the Adventist Church

"Justice delayed, is justice denied."

William Gladstone

There is a book, entitled What Ellen White Has Meant to Me<sup>1</sup>, on my library shelf at home, which was edited by a well known Adventist theologian and published in the mid-nineteen seventies, shortly before the church voted to continue its policy of denying ministerial ordination to women. This book consists of thirty testimonies (including the Foreword by the General Conference President) which praise the contributions and accomplishments that Ellen White made in behalf of the Adventist church. Ironically, all thirty contributors, who describe this woman as the most influential person in Adventist theology and history, are men who occupy, or have occupied, important leadership positions in the church. The fact that there is not even a "token" female contributor included, serves as a reminder that while the church may owe its deepest debt of gratitude to a woman, it is presently an institution totally dominated by men. In spite of the increasing number of leadership positions which have opened to women in society, and in other protestant churches in the last two decades, such opportunities within Adventism have been denied. Ordination remains an elusive goal for those women who seek it and many

within the church still consider any movement that advocates equal rights for women to be satanically inspired. The only book, thesis, or dissertation which has been published on the subject of women's ordination in the Adventist church, clearly expresses this view in the following quotation, and strongly opposes female leadership.

It is interesting to note how the movement for women's rights and liberation which started in the sixties (a movement that seeks the destruction of such fundamental issues as marriage, chastity, the home as the core of society, children, etc., a thing which our church rejects as opposed to its principles) and whose methods and activities have nothing to do with the Bible, has nevertheless taken by the arm that well-worn and almost-forgotten subject of the ordination of the woman, and has brought it to the limelight.<sup>2</sup>

This statement, which summarizes the author's thesis, contains three false assumptions. First, it assumes that a movement which seeks human equality by promoting women's rights is socially destructive. Secondly, it claims that the issue of sexual equality has "nothing to do with the Bible." And finally, it assumes that ordination for women is an issue which has already been settled by past revelation, and should not be advocated by those who profess to be Christians. These three assumptions are not just the isolated opinion of one Adventist, but represent the thinking of many in the church who are strongly opposed to ordaining women as Adventist ministers, or even allowing them to occupy token positions of leadership.<sup>3</sup>

This paper will attempt to raise five contemporary questions, problems, or issues related to women's ordination and sexual tokenism in the Adventist church. My second paper will then attempt to address or examine these points by providing a theological framework for dealing with sexual inequality in Adventism. The specific issues or questions which will be considered are as follows: 1) a brief historical perspective concerning recent developments, which have contributed to the problem of sexual inequality in the Adventist church; 2) the socio-cultural pressures and problems relating to the issues of sexism in the church; 3) the problem of equality, as it relates to socially conditioned or biologically determined differences between the sexes; 4) the problem of sexual tokenism as a way of dealing with inequality; 5) the problem of ecumenical disruption and polarization in relation to women's ordination and sexual inequality.

#### The Historical Problem

Ten years ago, the Biblical Research Office of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, a relatively conservative group of church scholars, presented a report at the 1973 Annual Council which specifically stated that the scriptures cannot be marshalled to forbid the appointment of any qualified woman to any position of church leadership, or to deny such a woman ministerial ordination. Beyond this,

the report argued that scriptural principles clearly support equal opportunities for women, and full utilization of their talents with regard to all positions of leadership and service without discrimination. Furthermore, the committee recommended to church administration that they remove discriminatory restrictions against women in those parts of the world field where social and cultural practices would permit such change.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, church leaders chose to reject these recommendations, and much of the momentum which had been gained during the mid-seventies was lost, at a time when many other churches were openly and positively dealing with the problem of sexism.<sup>5</sup>

Nearly a decade later the situation has not significantly improved, nor has the problem diminished. Women are still excluded from the ordained ministry and thereby denied key leadership positions in the church. These include the chief editorial positions occupied by those who manage major church publications, and the "highest" level of administration in the General Conference, unions, local conferences and local churches.<sup>6</sup> While Protestant seminaries in general have an average female enrollment of thirty to fifty percent,<sup>7</sup> less than two percent of the students taking Adventist graduate programs in religion at the time of this writing are women. Only one of 245 M.Div. students who enrolled in the Adventist seminary at Andrews University last year was a woman.<sup>8</sup> This kind of sexual imbalance



greatly disturbed the accrediting team from the Association of Theological Seminaries that visited the campus. The great majority of women who do complete their ministerial training programs, are not able to find positions of employment in the church.<sup>9</sup> Most importantly, women have no significant voice in the decision making processes of the church. The hierarchical administrative structure reserves the highest authoritative positions for those who are ordained ministers and therefore excludes women. This becomes obvious when one looks at the make up of two of the most powerful political bodies in the denomination.

The General Conference Executive Committee, which acts as the decision-making body between General Conference sessions, has approximately 365 members from around the world. Only eight are women, including six departmental associate directors and two lay women. This figure is not even respectable tokenism. No women sit on PREXAD, the fourteen member Presidents Executive Advisory Committee composed of vice-presidents and secretaries of the General Conference.<sup>10</sup>

When one considers the fact that women compose approximately sixty percent of Adventism's world membership, it is difficult to deny that sexism is a serious problem in the church. What is most surprising is that opportunities for leadership in Adventism have actually declined for women in recent decades at a time when societal trends have been moving in just the opposite direction. In the first century of Adventist history (1844-1944) women played a much more prominent role in church leadership than they have in the

post World War II era.<sup>11</sup> Increased tendencies towards institutionalism and clericalism have reinforced male dominance in church government and led to a "domestication of the Spirit" which minimizes the presence of charismatic gifts in the community of faith. This in turn has contributed to the fact that roles and opportunities for women in church leadership have significantly diminished. Nearly all women directly connected with ministerial work are either Bible workers or Associates in Pastoral Care (a new position created in 1977 for unordained ministers), but even these women make up only about one percent of the total ministerial working force in the church.<sup>12</sup> The rigidity of current church structure creates a system which is very difficult for women with ministerial gifts to penetrate. As one former female Adventist pastor put it, "I find that God is much more flexible than people are."

However, there are some hopeful signs. First, women in the church organized the Association of Adventist Women in June of 1982<sup>13</sup>, which still has a very small membership, but is attempting to address some of the above mentioned problems. Secondly, the church has assigned a thirty member advisory board from the Office of Human Relations to present and represent the concerns of women to the General Conference. But, here again, only two of the thirty individuals commissioned to participate on this advisory board are

women. At this point it is difficult to predict what the future holds for women in the Adventist church.

The purpose of this brief historical sketch is to provide the reader with an overview of the problems that face Adventist women. I will attempt to summarize these problems by asking some basic questions, which will be explored further in the theological paper to follow. 1) Why are Adventist women deprived of leadership opportunities in their church, in contrast to women in most other Protestant churches? Are there theological concerns related to this discrepancy? 2) What is the connection between practice and profession in the Adventist theology of laity and how does this relate to the issue of equality for women? 3) Is there a relationship between sectarianism, parochialism and sexism in those churches which are most guilty of discriminating against women?

#### The Socio-Cultural Problem

I was recently confronted by a church member who had read some statements of mine, supporting sexual equality, in an Adventist publication.<sup>14</sup> She accused me, and others, of caving into social cultural trends which to her mind clearly violated the direct mandate of scripture concerning women. It was difficult for her to accept, when I suggested, an opposite perspective. Because Biblical and Christian theology developed in an extremely patriarchal cultural

context, it is hardly surprising that it reflects a male bias, the socio-cultural practices of the day did not allow for any other possibility. Today, when new possibilities are opening, because of cultural changes, the church is no longer being held back from advocating sexual equality by social pressures but instead of mowing forward it has become one of the most significant structures to oppose such change.

Generally, churches are conservative, even "liberal" churches. They tend to have a passion for the traditional which reinforces patriarchy. And while there are obvious exceptions, it seems that many church institutions almost take pride in seeking to be society's last bastions of "male supremacy." If the church fails to promote human equality today, it can no longer blame cultural conditions for its hesitancy and unfaithfulness. The following socio-cultural factors which have developed in this century not only provide an opportunity , but actually invite the churches to grasp a new vision of human equality, which will allow them to be forces for social change rather than forces against it.

#### Social Change Within the Family

With the dawning of the industrial revolution in America the family as a traditional institution was destined to experience profound change. Indeed, it could be argued

that the family has changed more in the last 100 years than in the entire history of western civilization. The following<sup>15</sup> are some of the most significant changes which have occurred, or are occurring, in relationship to sexual inequality in the twentieth century.

1. Reciprocity - There are increasing tendencies towards egalitarian approaches to decision making, and reciprocal role relationships, between husbands and wives. The percentage of homes where men attempt to exercise unilateral authority, has significantly decreased in the last twenty-five years.
2. Technological Progress - The amount of housework required to physically maintain a home is continually decreasing due to technological advances. Futurists project that this trend will accelerate as home robots become popular, allowing more time for individuals to pursue professional or other kinds of goals.
3. Family Related Legislation - Recent laws directly affecting family life have been aimed at reducing sexual inequality. (e.g. Laws concerning property rights, maternity leave, abortion, child support, alimony and child custody for men, etc.)
4. Birth Control - Dependable methods of birth control have allowed women to determine their own destinies of motherhood, as well as allowing for the option of choosing not to have children in order to totally commit themselves to a career.
5. Life Expectancy - Increased life expectancy combined with sociological trends whereby mothers are having fewer children, bunched more closely together, during the early years of marriage, all contribute to the fact that the average married woman has much more time to pursue a personal career after children are raised.

6. Domestic Instability - The instability of the traditional family unit has become apparent. Divorce and remarriage have increased to the point where these practices have lost much of their social stigma. Sociologists project that the majority of children born in the 1980's will spend part of their childhood in single parent families. Such trends will revolutionize concepts of child rearing and necessitate the reappearance of the extended family.
7. Private Violence - There is higher occurrence, or at least greater awareness, of violence within the home. The tremendous increase in reported cases of child abuse, wife abuse, molestation, incest, rape and murder committed within the family units, indicates that many women no longer feel helpless against such private crimes, and are refusing to endure them in silence.
8. Government Aid - Finally, the increasing number of government programs providing services for families in need, have also opened up new opportunities for women. Programs which offer counseling, child care, aid for dependent mothers, and centers for victims of abuse and rape are meeting a growing need which too many churches have ignored.

#### Societal Change Outside the Home

In addition to the above mentioned domestic factors, there have been a number of other sociological developments<sup>16</sup>, in the last century, which have also contributed to creating a cultural climate that is more favorable to the establishment of sexual equality. Consider the following:

1. Education - Both men and women are attaining higher levels of education. This is particularly true of middle aged women who are pursuing new careers after their children are older. This trend has certainly allowed women to become more independent, but even

where they have received the same amount of education, females on the average still make only eighty percent of the salary of their male counterparts.

2. Freedom - American social trends in the 1970's and 80's have generally placed more emphasis on individualism and self-fulfillment. Disillusionment and distrust over public institutions and traditional norms/authorities has contributed to individualism, while high technology has created more opportunity for pleasure, recreation and self-improvement.
3. Employment Opportunities - In 1890 an economic landmark was achieved in America, when for the first time manufacturing exceeded agriculture as a contributor to the national income. Since then, the labor market has increasingly provided more jobs that do not require heavy manual labor or great physical strength (e.g. sales, electronics, clerical, service jobs, etc.) However, the percentage of women workers in male dominated professions in the 1970's was approximately the same as in the 1950's.
4. Legal Rights - Even though the ERA was not ratified, the twentieth century has provided a breakthrough in legislation which requires equal rights for both sexes. Most notably, the nineteenth amendment (right to vote) 1920, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 (no discrimination against women by employers).
5. Role Concepts - Sex roles have become increasingly fluid in western culture. For example, many employers now pay paternity and maternity leaves. Biological differences between the sexes are ignored, manipulated, minimized or transcended through homosexuality, bi-sexuality, transexuality and greater emphasis on social conditioning.
6. Economic Instability - The twentieth century has witnessed a series of war, recessions, periods of prosperity, and depressions. All of these have impacted significantly on women. Wars have taken male workers out of the job market. Recessions and depressions

have made extra income for families necessary, and prosperity has made more jobs available to women.

7. Pluralism - In spite of the vocal minority of Right Wingers who would have it otherwise, Americans are becoming increasingly diverse in their opinions and perceptions of morality and reality. With the decline of rigid belief systems and dogmatism has come a greater degree of tolerance for new ideas on the one hand, and moral uncertainty and insecurity on the other. Many people are looking for a cause to commit themselves to.
8. Social Movements - Just as the Abolitionist Movement of the nineteenth century helped to stimulate the feminist activities which followed, so the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's had a formative influence on contemporary feminism, and the development of the various organizations presently promoting women's liberation.

All of the above mentioned factors have helped to create a new cultural climate, and a reformulation of societal concepts concerning women. Seventh-day Adventism has not adequately adjusted with the times to accommodate itself to such cultural changes. A great number in the church still attempt to literally apply the direct counsels concerning child rearing, motherhood, male authority and various other forms of domestic and social advice given by Ellen White in the nineteenth century, to specific situations in the 1980's. For this reason there is a strong support for the "pro-family" movement in Adventism, and a general opposition to women's liberation. This again, is ironic when one considers the fact that Ellen White was not only a social activist in her day, but was also a very



liberated woman in terms of her own behavior. Those who justify attitudes which oppose full equality for women, by appealing to the writings of Ellen White, do violence to the spirit of her works.

If Adventists are to constructively respond to the socio-cultural factors which have been raised, and to become a force in favor of sexual equality, rather than a tool for implementing the cultural status quo, the church must address itself to the following questions. First, how can Adventism most effectively break away from its past heritage of cultural isolationism? Secondly, what specific steps can the church take to sensitize itself to the importance of social ethics/justice? Finally, what practical internal changes as well as activities, programs and educational services can Adventist churches offer their surrounding communities to promote full sexual equality in our society.

#### The Problem of Equality Versus Sexual Difference

I recently ran across a cartoon that was both sobering and humorous. It pictured a lady asking herself the question, what must a woman go through to become a priest? Twelve years of grade school? Four years of seminary? Three years of graduate school? Two years of pastoral training? One year as a deacon? Finally, in the last frame she bolts up out of bed - the answer has finally dawned on her - a two hour sex change operation! Humorous - yes, but

also sobering, because in many churches, today, a sex change operation is the only thing standing between a tremendous number of gifted women, and ordination to the priesthood or ministry.

Several years ago, a talented female surgeon was severely criticized by a senior, male, surgeon who had flatly stated that "a woman is not capable of doing surgery." She solved the problem personally confronting the man with these words, "Doctor, I want to watch you operate. I want to see what part of your anatomy you use in performing surgery that I as a woman am not equipped with."<sup>17</sup> A similar challenge could be addressed to those in the Adventist church, or in other churches, who deny ordination on the basis of sex. What is there about male biological construction that uniquely equips one for the task of ordained ministry? Are there real and significant differences between men and women beyond the sex organs or basic anatomical structure? These are questions that are currently being debated, and which raise important issues for Adventists to consider.

Controversies over whether the differences between men and women are primarily innate, as opposed to being environmentally influenced, have been common in American history since our nation first gained its independence. Prior to the Revolution, the view that females were innately inferior, in both their physical and mental capabilities, went

basically unchallenged.<sup>18</sup> Since that time, however, the debate has resembled a pendulum swing from century to century. Influenced generally by the enlightenment, and more specifically by the works of Marry Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), environmental feminism became a significant force in the latter part of the eighteenth century. This view, which explained sex differences from a socio-cultural perspective (including physical strength) and claimed total equality for women, found increasing support until Darwinian and Freudian concepts laid the foundation for the re-emerging popularity of innatism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Radical feminists like Eliza Gamble and Charlotte Gilman responded to this shift by adopting innatism, and used it to support the notion of "superior feminism", a movement based on the belief that the female among all orders of life represents a higher stage of development than the male.<sup>19</sup> In the modern feminist movement of the last two decades, the debate over heredity versus environment has continued to attract attention. Radical feminists (Mary Daly, Naomi Goldenberg, etc.), and the most reactionary woman's organizations (Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, Bev LaHaye's Concerned Women for America, etc.) have both advocated innatism to opposite ends - namely to support the natural superiority of the female on the one hand or, on the other hand, the inherent subordination of women. The reformist wing of the feminist movement

(Rosemary Ruether, Sheila Collins, etc.) has generally tended to identify with the environmentalist view, championed by Wollstonecraft. However, increasing numbers of both reformist and moderate feminists (evangelicals) are moving towards what Marlow and Davis call "Differential Egalitarianism", a view which emphasizes the interaction of environment and biology. Differential Egalitarians believe that the environment affects hormonal behavior in males and females, but that it cannot alter traits and characteristics.<sup>20</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally identified with many of the conservative views currently advocated by the National Pro-Family Coalition, particularly with regard to the mother's place in the home, homosexuality and unisex laws. Interestingly enough, Adventists only tend to take strong positions on those moral issues which were specifically addressed by Ellen White in her day.<sup>21</sup> Recent research concerning the left and right hemispheres of the brain, as they are related to gender, has been used by some Adventists and other conservative groups to support the position of biologically determined roles. But, it is essential that we recognize that the evidence indicates that culture plays a large part in determining which half of the brain gets more fully developed, and that many of the studies which have been used to reinforce the need for rigid sex roles have been guilty of obvious sex bias.<sup>22</sup>

### The Problem of Sexual Tokenism

One of the most controversial issues facing Christian women today is how to deal with the problem of tokenism. Is tokenism a first necessary step in reforming patriarchal institutions, or is it a practice that only serves to reinforce the patriarchal status quo? Is it a positive force for change, or a deceptive "anesthetic" that deadens the process of consciousness raising by creating false hopes, which are used to control and manipulate women?

What should a minister say when she is told that she has been chosen as the lone female member of a National Committee, because her church has a policy that race and gender are not factors in choosing members, except "when we get above twelve, we have to have a woman and a black."<sup>23</sup> This kind of condescending tokenism, which was common in the mainline Protestant churches twenty years ago is still being practiced in the Adventist church today. In fact, church leadership has even been extremely slow in recognizing the value of tokenism, probably due to the absence of feminist pressures from within that would make such action politically expedient. There are token women on major denominational committees, and there are a small number of women who have been ordained as local elders, but there is still not even a token ordained woman minister in the Adventist church. Yet, when we observe the patterns of tokenism that have emerged

in the churches which do ordain even a large percentage of female ministers, we notice that the system of patriarchal authority and ultimate male domination remain virtually unchanged.<sup>24</sup>

This raises the question of whether Adventist women will actually benefit from any decision that would allow them to become ordained ministers. Certainly, individual women would benefit from the opportunity to use their gifts more fully in the community of faith, but it is not likely that such individual opportunities would be used to maintain a system of tokenism which perpetuates the status quo by preserving ultimate authority in the hands of a male dominated hierarchy?

A number of feminists that have witnessed this pattern in the churches are strongly opposed to the practice of tokenism. Rosemary Ruether has observed that female tokens in the ministry have not affected the traditional hierarchical relationship between clergy and laity. "Women play the ministerial role by endlessly proving that they can think, feel, and act like 'one of the boys.' The 'boys' in turn accept them only in token numbers that do no threaten their monopoly on ecclesiastical power. . . . Women win inclusion in the ministry, without asking whether ministry itself needs to be redefined."<sup>25</sup> A much stronger objection to the practice of tokenism is voiced by Mary Daly. She calls it an insidiously destructive demonic trap which functions to

hide both the reality of oppressions and the possibilities for better options.<sup>26</sup> What these "better options" are, is not clearly defined by Daly, but there is significant evidence to support the claim that tokenism dulls the revolutionary impulse and has produced a host of what she calls, "Patriarchy's puppets," not only in the ministry, but in nearly all of the professions.<sup>27</sup>

It is always easy to criticize. The greater challenge is to offer constructive alternatives. Few are satisfied with Daly's "otherwordly" approach which amounts to little more than utopian escapism, based on alienation between the sexes. However as Janet Penfield has stated, few other feminist solutions have been proposed, "No first-rate woman thinker and writer has offered a defense of the church as-it-is, or, on the other hand, a model of the church as it ought to be."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the problem of tokenism as it relates to woman's ordination and patriarchal church government remains an issue which desperately needs to be addressed. While some cling to the hope that women seminarians can form a catalyst for new church structures in the future,<sup>29</sup> the power of tokenism has effectively undermined any such potential for radical change thus far. It seems that radical change can only occur as men and women grasp a joint vision of justice and sexual equality for the church and for the world. Such a vision may not necessarily mean that the future of the church would require that there be a

fifty-fifty split between men and women on all levels of church government, but it would mean that the tragic waste of the church's gifts<sup>30</sup> which has occurred in Adventism, and nearly all other denominations that limit the influence of women through such practices as tokenism, would be stopped in the name of common sense and true Christianity.

#### The Problem of Ecumenical Disruption and Polarization

In his highly praised book, The Ordination of Women, Paul Jewett reviews and challenges the traditional and theological arguments which have been used, to combat those who seek unlimited opportunities for women in church leadership. Unfortunately, there is one very important argument that Jewett fails to adequately address. This argument is based on the charge that feminist attempts to sexually integrate church government have not only proved to be divisive in many local churches, but have also provoked denominational disunity, and disrupted the ecumenical spirit between denominations. The denial of ordination to women on the grounds that church unity must be preserved, is the most common and powerful argument used to limit the roles of women by Adventist church leadership. After all, was it not true that Paul himself chose to pragmatically sanction the practice of slavery and female subordination for the sake of the Gospel and church unity, even though he recognized that this was not the ideal (Gal. 3:28)?



Such a question is actually not difficult to answer, because the Christian churches (including Adventists) have already chosen to risk fragmentation for the sake of racial liberation (first in the Abolitionist Movement and more recently in the Civil Rights Movement). How then can we inconsistently refuse to risk fragmentation for the sake of sexual equality? Can we afford to purchase unity at the cost of moral integrity and justice? Adventists are not the only denomination which seems to be willing to make such a compromise. Recently, a number of leading theologians from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox churches contributed to a book which took a strong position against the ordination of women. Robert Terwilliger's chapter, entitled, "A Fractured Church,"<sup>31</sup> was particularly relevant to this paper. It traced the polarization and division which has occurred within the Episcopal church in the United States, since it voted to ordain women by a narrow margin in 1976. Not only did several thousand people leave the church over the issue, but ecumenical dialogue which had been steadily progressing between Episcopalians, Catholics and Orthodox churches was severely hampered. The Adventist church is presently resisting any movement towards full equality for women, because it fears that it might experience a similar fate. The political consequences of such a choice could indeed be serious, particularly outside the

United States, but ultimately it seems that questions of faith and justice must supercede political considerations.

The greatest challenge, in all of this, is to create a model for complete sexual equality in the churches, which will most effectively minimize the amount of anger, tension, hostility and division which often seems to surround the whole issue of women's ordination and ecclesiastical authority. This is most likely to occur in a context that emphasizes an egalitarian vision of human liberation, as was recently stressed in the newly published Sheffield Report of the World Council of Churches on Human Liberation.<sup>32</sup> If the barriers of sexism are to be broken, they will be broken by women and men who have avoided the fit falls of anger and defensiveness. Men and women in joint cooperation, who are motivated by a love for justice and equality rather than simple self-interest, provide the greatest hope and potential for changing our sexist society. For this reason, many ethicists and theologians are using the terms human liberation and egalitarianism, in preference to women's liberation and feminism. They are stressing a holistic vision which transcends a masculine versus feminine mentality.<sup>33</sup> However, books and words are not enough to change a sexist church or society. As Elsie Gibson says,

It is much easier to reach a conclusion in academic circles about the opportunities women ought to have than it is to implement those conclusions in the outside world where the dead

weight and strong momentum of sociological pressures work for the status quo.<sup>34</sup>

She goes on in this article to emphasize the necessity of active male involvement in issues of sexual inequality in the church. In both churches that ordain women, and churches that don't, there seems to be glaring lack of support for opening leadership roles to women.<sup>35</sup> Adventists are certainly no exception to this rule. Today, the Christian community is not only in need of women who are committed to sexual equality and liberation, but it is desperately in need of men who are neither weak kneed nor condescending in their attitudes towards women, but who are firmly committed to human liberation, because they have a love for justice.

# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Douglass, ed., What Ellen White Has Meant To Me (Washington, D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Isaac Suarez, Woman's Role and Ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Berrien Springs, Mich., M.A. Project-Andrews University School of Graduate Studies, 1981), p. 69. The notion that seeking equality and liberation for women is a godless and unbiblical goal can also be found in an article by R.R. Bietz, "Easy Divorces, Trial Marriage, Women's Lib ... Forces Undermining Marriage and Home", Ministry (Feb. 1978), pp. 12, 13.

<sup>3</sup> For a sample of similar views, the following are all articles which strongly oppose ordination for women in the Adventist ministry: Hedwig Jemison, Our God-Appointed Roles: Should Women Be Ordained? (unpublished manuscript available in the Heritage Room of the La Sierra Campus Library of Loma Linda University, Sept., 1973); Alfredo Aeschlimann, "Woman's Role in Life and the Church as Outlined in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy" (Suarez M.A. Thesis Appendix B, pp. 85-90); J.S. Wiggins, "Should the Seventh-day Adventist Church Ordained Women to the Gospel Ministry?" (Suarez M.A. Thesis Appendix C, pp. 91-96).

<sup>4</sup> Biblical Research Committee, "Roles of Women in The Seventh-day Adventist Church", (unpublished manuscript presented at Annual Council, 1973) pp. 8, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the World Council of Churches-1974, Sexism in the 1970's - Discrimination Against Women (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975), "Women in Third World and Socialist Countries," pp. 66-93; "Women in the West," pp. 97-104.

<sup>6</sup> For specific statistics on women in Adventist church leadership see, Janice Daffern, "How Long Must Women Wait? Prospects for Adventist Church Leadership", Spectrum (12:4, June, 1982) pp. 39-43; and Roger Dudley, "Greater Role for Women in the Church", Administery (Summer, 1982), pp. 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Zikmund, "Women in Ministry Face the 80's", The Christian Century (Feb. 3-10, 1982), p. 113.

<sup>8</sup> Daffern, Spectrum, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Dudley, Administery, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Daffern, Spectrum, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Biblical Research Committee, "Role of Women. . .," p. 15. For specific examples of women who played influential leadership roles in the early Adventist history in contrast to what has happened in more recent decades, see, John Beach, Notable Women of Spirit: The Historical Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1976), especially pp. 111-116.

<sup>12</sup> Rosalie Lee, "women in the Ministry", The Adventist Review (March 16, 1978), p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> The Adventist Woman (1:6, Winter, 1982) p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Daily, "Equality for SDA Women," Spectrum (13:2, Dec., 1982), p. 68.

<sup>15</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the various points listed consult the following sources: "Private Violence", Times (Sept. 5, 1983), pp. 18-29; "The Next 50 Years", U.S. News and World Report (May 9, 1983), pp. A3, A4; Barrie Thorne ed., Rethinking the Family (New York: Longman, 1982), pp. 168-235; Betty Sterling, Society, Women and the Church (unpublished manuscript: Loma Linda University Library (LSC), 1975).

<sup>16</sup> In addition to the sources mentioned in the last note, see also, Anthony Campolo, The Success Fantasy (Wheaton, III.: Victor Books, 1980); Eloise Snyder, The Study of Women: Enlarging Perspective of Social Reality (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1979); Josephine Benton, A Survey of Current Secular Trends Which Have Raised the Issue of the Role of Women in the Church (Loma Linda University Library, LSC: unpublished manuscript, Oct., 1973)

<sup>17</sup> Judith Hale and Ellen Levine, Rebirth of Feminism (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971), pp. 358-359.

<sup>18</sup> H.C. Marlow and H.M. Davis, The American Search for Woman (Oxford, England: Clio Books, 1976), pp. 16, 17. For a list of primary sources which support this point, see p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. pp. 195-197. See also, Olive Banks, Face of Feminism (New York: St. Martin Press, 1981), pp. 225 F.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 253-258.

21 Many Adventists suffer under sexual represiveness of 19th century American views of sexuality, because of their fundamentalist belief in Ellen White's inspiration. For example, masturbation is viewed with grave suspicion and fear within the church.

22 See Sheila Collins, A Different Heaven and Earth (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1974), p. 170. See also, Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (London: Harvard University Press, 1982); Joseph Pleck, The Myth of Masculinity (London: MIT Press, 1981, 1983).

23 Christian Century April 29, 1981, Janet Penfield, "What's a Nice Woman Like You Doing in a Male-Dominated Church Like This?"

24 World Council of Churches 1974 Report (cited above), pp. 97-112; compare this with WWC 1981 Report - The Community of Women and Men in the Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 23-28.

25 Rosemary Ruether, Sexism and God-talk (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p. 200.

26 Mary Daly, Gyn-Ecology (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 375.

27 Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), pp. 14, 52, 169.

28 Janet Penfield, "What's a Nice Woman Like You. . .," Christian Century, p. 494.

29 See Paul Jewett, The Ordination of Women (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 108-111.

30 For a specific account of how female gifts are being wasted see, Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, All We're Meant to Be (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1974, 1982), pp. 169-181.

31 Robert Terwilliger, "A Fractured Church", Man, Woman and Priesthood (Peter Moore, ed., London: SPC k, 1979), pp. 134-163.

32 World Council of Churches Sheffield Report, The Community of Women and Men in the Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 96-101.

<sup>33</sup> For a sampling of such literature see Janet Chafetz, Masculine/Feminine or Human (1974); Letty Russell, Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective-A Theology (1977); Tari Malcom, Women at the Crossroads (1982); John Bennett, The Radical Imperative, pp. 108-119 (1975); Walter Brueggemann, Living Toward a Vision (1982); Charles Birch and John Cobb, The Liberation of Life (1981).

<sup>34</sup> Elsie Gibson, "Ecumenism and the Ordination of Women", Cross Currents (Fall, 1978), p. 300.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 304.

APPENDIX B

TOWARDS AN ADVENTIST THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

by

Steven Daily

A Paper Presented to the Association  
of Adventist Women and the Association  
of Adventist Forums in Loma Linda, California  
on March 18, 1984



### Towards An Adventist Theology of Liberation

One of the great delusions many professed Christians have fallen victim to throughout church history is the assumption that the Christian community generally consists of individuals who possess higher moral responsiveness and sensitivity than those who reject religion or accept alternative belief systems. This mentality presumes that the majority of Christians are certainly more loving, merciful, tolerant, affirming, and emotionally healthy than their fellow human beings outside the circle of Christianity.

The problem with this kind of thinking, in our contemporary context, is that it fails to recognize the fact that in recent decades findings resulting from a host of studies<sup>1</sup> have not only cast doubt on such conclusions, but have profoundly contributed to opposing viewpoints. It now seems clear that there is a significant correlation between certain forms of strict Christian orthodoxy in conservative protestant churches and increased tendencies towards bigotry, sexism, racism, prejudice, intolerance, rigidity, dogmatism, etc.<sup>2</sup> Other studies suggest that these negative attitudes are not just associated with Fundamentalist Christian groups, but are more closely related to extrinsic religious values held by individuals in various religious communities. In other words, there is a close relationship

between prejudice and extrinsic beliefs, whereas, tolerance is associated with intrinsic religious beliefs<sup>3</sup> which are held by a significant minority of Christians.

In his recently published book, Self Esteem: The New Reformation, Robert Schuller has made an important contribution to our understanding of why the average Christian may actually tend to be more prejudice and intolerant than his/her non-Christian counterpart. After he commissioned George Gallup, Jr. to conduct a thorough poll dealing with the self-esteem of the American people Schuller concluded that Christians generally suffer from a lower self-concept, or lack a strong sense of self-esteem, to a greater degree than non-Christians.<sup>4</sup> If this is true, then it would naturally follow that, in contrast with those Christians who have a positive intrinsic faith, Christians who do not have a healthy self-concept (do not possess a positive sense of self-esteem) would be much more likely to demonstrate an uncharitable spirit and intolerant, prejudicial attitudes toward their fellow human beings.<sup>5</sup> The introspective Christian who focused primarily on dogma and personal piety is often sadly deficient in the kind of healthy self-love which Christ promoted (Matt. 22:36-40), and therefore finds it very difficult to reveal a generous, loving spirit to others.

Recognizing that there is much professed Christianity which fails to actively address itself to issues of social

ethics, or the contemporary global problems of human injustice and oppression, the Liberation Movement in the Christian churches is attempting to close the gap between theology and praxis. It defines the essence of true religion in terms of breaking down the racial, sexual, social, economic and religious barriers which divide human beings, by providing a holistic vision of just and responsible treatment of all life forms be they human, animal, or environmental. This is not a utopian theology, but a realistic vision of what our embattled planet might become if we were to seriously address the problem of global injustice in the light of available resources.<sup>6</sup>

Any movement towards an Adventist theology of liberation is progress. In spite of the fact that the church's theology has always contained a potential for addressing the issue of human liberation the gap between theology and practice has often been significant. Traditionally, Adventism has tended to define the essence of religion in terms of "correct dogma" and personal piety. Therefore, it is not surprising that the church has struggled with legalism, externalism and intolerance. While this paper is primarily concerned with searching for theological clues in Adventist thought which specifically promote the notion of sexual equality, or women's liberation, the implications will have an obvious application to any further study which might attempt to

develop a wholistic Adventist theology of liberation.

The remainder of the paper will deal with five themes in Adventist theology which can be understood and practiced in a liberation context that would greatly broaden opportunities for women in the church. Under each of the following headings: 1) Spiritual Gifts; 2) Wholism; 3) Eschatology; 4) Inspiration; and 5) Ecclesiology, there will be an attempt to demonstrate a traditional conflict or contradiction between theology and praxis in the church and to show how the above mentioned theological motifs can help us to narrow this gap between belief and practice.

### Spiritual Gifts

Since the very beginning of the Adventist movement the doctrine of spiritual gifts, and particularly the gift of prophecy, has been emphasized and placed in a position of primary importance in the church's theology. However, Ellen White has traditionally been considered to be the personification of this gift and even after her death (1915) her writings have been commonly referred to by Adventists as "The Spirit of Prophecy." This gift of prophecy is believed to be an identifying mark of the "remnant church," a label which Adventists have traditionally applied to themselves.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, while the church has placed a woman in such a prominent theological role, the question remains, how can the primacy of Ellen White be suitably harmonized with the

general subordination of all other Adventist women in the church, and specifically with the refusal to fully acknowledge the gifts of leadership that these women have been given. To understand and address this problem, we must take a closer look at how Adventists have allowed their views on the gift of prophecy to supercede and in some ways negate a consistent theology of spiritual gifts.

When Adventists point to the great things that God accomplished through Ellen White during her lifetime, the traditional emphasis has always been focused on the charismatic gifts that this "weak human vessel" received through supernatural revelation or direct visions from God. The idea that Ellen White was a talented and gifted woman apart from this supernatural divine intervention in her life has been minimized or denied. Therefore, one reads in Adventist literature about how Ellen White was the weakest of the weak, in terms of natural human capabilities. It is stressed on the one hand that she was sickly, uneducated and totally incapable of accomplishing the overwhelming amount of work that she did on her own, while descriptions of her visionary experiences emphasize superhuman physical feats, and supernatural insights into even the personal, secret lives of various human beings that she addressed in her testimonies.<sup>10</sup> The fact that she was a woman has not served to sensitize church leaders to the leadership gifts which so many Adventist women possess, but has actually been used

against women. Adventists have emphasized the point that God first called two different men to receive the visions, and it was only when they refused the call that God turned to a "humble and lowly woman." In other words, the womanhood of Ellen White has been used, right along with her poor education and health, as just another evidence of what miraculous things God can accomplish through the weakest of human instruments. In his recent dissertation, which compares Ellen White to other female religious leaders in the nineteenth century, Ron Graybill shows how this problem has affected Adventists in contrast to other religious movements led by charismatic women.

While the achievements of a woman like Catherine Booth showed what any woman could do, Ellen White merely demonstrated that God possessed the power to accomplish His ends by granting visions even to an uneducated person. Her womanhood as such had nothing to do with her leadership.<sup>11</sup>

The traditional church teaching regarding the prophetic gift, which suggests that the prophet is the recipient of supernatural messages, and that he/she acts as an infallible channel through which God's will is received by the believer has done a great deal to stifle Adventism's theology of spiritual gifts, and to restrict the church's understanding of the prophetic gift. Ellen White is unrealistically elevated as the sole recipient of the prophetic gift by Adventists, and therefore is granted a mythological authority which cannot be challenged by any other individual

who has received the prophetic gift. The exaggerated and fictitious claims which have been perpetuated concerning Ellen White, by her most devoted apologists, have done more harm than the works of all her critics. A careful reading of scripture (Eph. 4, Rom. 12, I Cor. 12 etc.) will not support the notion that the gifts comprise a hierarchical structure of authority in the church. The gift of prophecy is not defined in terms of inerrancy, futurism, or visionary experience. Rather the prophet is typically a charismatic figure who boldly points out sin, and acts as a moral conscience for social justice in the community of faith.<sup>12</sup>

Official Adventist theology gives strong "lip service" to the importance of spiritual gifts,

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity.<sup>13</sup>

The potential to liberate women from a subordinate position in Adventist church leadership can be found in our official theology, but in order to close the gap between theology and practice, we must be willing to acknowledge the womanhood and humanness of Ellen White in a way that will allow other gifted women in the church to fulfill the potential God has given them. As a number of Adventist, and non-Adventist, scholars have observed, the church can no longer afford to waste the communities' gifts with flagrant disregard for the abilities of women.<sup>14</sup> To do so is to invite the wrath of

God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer once warned, "a community which allows unemployed members to exist within it will perish because of them."<sup>15</sup> To deny one's own gifts or to suppress the gifts of others is to quench and grieve the Holy Spirit. One challenge then, that faces the Adventist church, is to take seriously its theology of spiritual gifts.

### Wholism

One of the most unique aspects of Adventist theology has traditionally been its emphasis on wholism. Long before the popular trend towards wholistic thinking emerged in recent Christian literature,<sup>16</sup> Adventists had been proclaiming their belief that human beings are whole creatures who cannot be divided into body and spirit. Even in the most formative period of Adventist theological development one finds a strong rejection of dualistic thought.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, because Adventists considered the Hebrew understanding of human beings, as wholistic creatures, to be the teaching of scripture, one finds a strong emphasis in the church's traditional theology on the goodness of creation, mortalism, annihilationism, the centrality of body resurrection, and the importance of physical health. The body is not evil, but the "temple of god."<sup>18</sup> The Adventist motto, "to make man whole," reveals the church's concern for the individual's mental, physical, spiritual, social, and emotional well being, and underlines



its belief that all of these components exist in the context of embodiment. In its rejection of anti-body theology, Adventism departed from the Greco-Gnostic influence contained in its Christian heritage, and in so doing created the potential for a new wholistic vision of ministry.

Unfortunately the church has not adequately pursued the full implications of this wholistic theology. It has primarily limited its vision to the realm of personal piety, stressing the importance of healthful living,<sup>19</sup> while generally avoiding the tremendous socio-ethical implications of such a theology. However, in recent years a number of non-Adventist scholars have traced the problems of misogyny and asceticism, to the anti-body dualism of Greco-Gnostic thought which had a profound influence on Patristic theology. Not only did this theology view human sexuality with great suspicion,<sup>20</sup> it also laid the foundation for a hierarchical differentiation between man and woman based on the assumption that maleness was primarily identified with intellectuality and spirituality, while femaleness was primarily identified with the lower material nature.<sup>21</sup> In Patristic literature woman becomes the source of sin as well as the spiritually inferior and passive recipient of a grace which can only be mediated

through an all male clerical caste. According to Rosemary Ruether, the early church fathers believed that

male erection was the essence of sin, and woman, as its source, became peculiarly the cause, object and extension of it... The soul-body dualism of the fathers blotted out the possibility of a personal relationship through the body, and made the relationship of man to woman essentially a subject-object relationship, in which the woman as 'sex object' was to be either wrongly abused for carnal pleasure or 'rightly used' in a dispassionate and objective (even carnal) way as a material means for the achievement of a further objective, that is the building up of the implanted male seed into a child. This depersonalized view of sexual relations gives three basic images of the possibilities of woman in the church fathers: woman as whore, woman as wife, and woman as virgin.<sup>22</sup>

But even as virgin the woman occupies a lower position in the spiritual hierarchy of the church than the man. Ruether continues, by applying dualistic thought to ministry,

This image of leadership splits the church into two groups, a clerical caste who represent the transcendent 'male' principle hierarchically related to a 'female' or 'passive' principle. Both clericalism and the pacification of the laity operate out of this symbolic psychology. The clergy are seen as bringing all grace and truth from 'above'. The people cease to be seen as possessing self-generating capacities for leadership by which they can bless, teach, forgive, or ordain one another. Instead they must receive the 'seminal word' or 'grace' as a power above and beyond themselves, which the clergy alone possess and mediate to them. The people assume the prone, passive position before the raised altars and pulpits of the 'fathers.' The laity becomes 'women-children' symbolically, and often actually as well, while the self-imagery of the clergy excludes the possibility of women exercising the hierarchical functions.<sup>23</sup>

If hierarchicalism and anti-body misconceptions of human sexuality have their roots in dualistic thought, one would hope that a theology which rejects soul-body dualism could also avoid hierarchicalism and anti-body attitudes towards sexuality, in terms of practice. But it has only been in very recent years that Adventists have been able to address the problems of sexual rigidity in the church, which can be traced to our victorian heritage through Ellen White, rather than to any dualistic notions,<sup>24</sup> The problems related to hierarchy in church structure, as it affects women, still remain very much unsolved and to a great degree unaddressed by official Adventism.

Unlike the Menonite and Quaker movements which were founded in the context of protest against social evil, Adventists inherited the pious religion of puritanism which focused its protest against personal evil. Therefore as the church has gradually evolved from sect to denomination, from prophet to priesthood (clericalism), and from charismatic authority to beaurocratic institutionalism,<sup>25</sup> its theological development has not traditionally occurred in a context that would allow the church to sensitize itself to issues of social and institutional sin. Hence, the church has preached a wholistic theology of personal piety, while practicing hierarchicalism in its subordination of women and its suppression of the laity in general.<sup>26</sup>

It is in relationship to this contradiction between theology and practice that Adventism can greatly benefit from seriously considering and exploring the implications of liberation theology. The Liberationists offer theological insights into the issue of sexuality, and sexual equality, which are a welcome addition to some of the classical and contemporary male works on sexuality that are not written from a liberation perspective (Barth, Brunner, Thielicke, and Jewett).<sup>27</sup> If Adventists can broaden their approach to theology, so as to emphasize the importance of social ethics to the same degree that the church presently focuses on personal ethics, then the potential for positive change in terms of church structure, and specifically its relation to sexual inequality, seems very hopeful. The soul/body dualism which plagues the thinking of the masses in most churches is not a problem or barrier in Adventist theology, therefore Adventism should have a natural advantage when it comes to integrating liberation theology with the traditional views of wholism that the church has always held. Wholistic theology is personal and social, it is concerned with maintaining a balance between the sect-type and institutional church, it is committed to working towards the ideal of a just and sustainable world where the environment and all life forms are treated with respect and consideration, while recognizing that imperfect beings in a imperfect world will never produce perfect solutions to our

problems. The worst sin, however, is to use human finiteness, and inability to achieve the ideal, as an excuse for negligence. Adventism can no longer afford to commit such a sin.

### Eschatology

Like the Millerite movement out of which it emerged, Adventism has always rejected the postmillennial, optimistic, view that society can be finally transformed or gradually improved through social reform. This social pessimism connected with the belief that divine intervention, or Christ's literal second coming, provides the only ultimate hope for humanity has led many scholars to conclude that premillennialist theology is incompatible with social reform or liberationist theology. David Rowe states that "the vast majority of (Millerite) Adventists turned their backs on the world and on human agencies of reform and yearned for the cleansing fires of divine wrath to rid the world of corruption"<sup>29</sup> while E.T. Clark has leveled the same criticism against twentieth century Adventists who advocate premillennialism.

Premillennialism inevitably operates to prevent efforts for social betterment on the part of those whose dearest dreams are set on the second advent. One finds little or no social consciousness among them. It is no part of the church's duty to reform and redeem the social order. Its function is to prepare a 'true church', a comparatively small body of saints, for membership in the coming kingdom.<sup>30</sup>

However, to equate premillennialism with attitudes of carelessness and insensitivity to human need is a mistake. Such a position fails to grasp the paradox in both Millerism,<sup>31</sup> and Adventism, whereby a strong social pessimism concerning the ultimate betterment of society has been combined with a keen interest in various social reforms (intemperance, licentiousness, abolition, prohibition, education, a worldwide medical, health care system, etc.)<sup>32</sup>. As Edwin Gaustad has observed, "while expecting a kingdom of God from the heavens, (Adventists) work diligently for one on earth."<sup>33</sup> And while it is true, as we have already noted, that Adventists have tried to meet human needs primarily on a personal level, as opposed to a socio-political level, it is the view of this writer that neither Adventist eschatology, nor Adventist theology in general demands such isolation from the socio-political process, but rather encourages involvement in it (specifically, in relation to the issue of women's rights and sexual equality).

The following themes<sup>34</sup> in Adventist eschatology, contrasted with opposing views, demonstrate that the church's theology is not by nature other-worldly, but that it actually lays a positive framework for this worldly involvement in socio-political issues, and has obvious implications relating to liberation from sexism.

1. Mortalism<sup>35</sup> vs. Dualistic immortality - a discussion of this distinction is found in the previous section on wholism.

2. Historicism vs. Dispensationalism - in contrast to dispensational theology with its futuristic emphasis on speculative prophecy, and its ahistorical insistence on a "Great Parenthesis", Adventism stresses the constant moral-ethical demands of God's covenant in history, and resists any prophetic interpretation or spiritualizing of scripture which minimizes the importance of the here and now or deemphasizes a religion of time and space.

3. Pre-millennialism vs. Post-millennialism - while post-millennialist churches seek to work for social reform and social progress in order to usher in a millennial kingdom, pre-millennialist Christians ideally seek to meet human needs, not because they are optimistic that imperfect human beings can bring about a perfect world, but simply because those needs exist.

4. Post-tribulationism vs. Pre-tribulationism - in pre-tribulationist theology the church escapes from a suffering world through a secret rupture. In contrast, post-tribulationist theology envisions the church as the suffering servant of humanity that ministers to the oppressed and seeks justice in the face of tribulation.

5. Arminianism vs. Pre-destination - with its strong emphasis on the importance of human free choice, Adventism

rejects the notion of a pre-ordained celestial time clock, and understands all prophecies in scripture to be conditional on human response. A premium is placed upon human choice and action in dealing with the moral-ethical dilemmas that face our world.

6. Annihilationism vs. Eternal Torment - if God is not merciful why should human beings be merciful? The notion of eternal torment provides an ethical motivation based in guilt or fear. Annihilationism stresses God's mercy and justice, and provides human beings with an ethical mandate which seeks social justice and elevates mercy.

7. Sabbatarianism vs. Secularism - in the life of Jesus Sabbath observance consisted primarily of serving humanity, or unselfishly meeting specific human needs. Adventist eschatology has emphasized sabbatarianism, but has allowed it to isolate the church from humanity rather than providing it with a symbol of protest against the materialism, consumerism, and secularism which plagues our age. Adventists must re-discover the purpose and meaning of the Sabbath in the context of its relevance to meeting the needs of the disinherited and seeking social justice.

Although the church has been slow to grasp the socio-political implications of its own eschatology, largely due to its pietistic roots, the gap between theology and practice should not blind us to the fact that Adventist eschatology provides a tremendous potential in terms of



making a significant contribution to Liberation theology and further developing some of the important eschatological insights relating to hope which Jurgen Moltmann has offered in his works.<sup>36</sup>

### Inspiration

Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally claimed to be strong Protestants who believe in the divine inspiration of scripture, and the priesthood of all individuals in the community of faith. Yet, here again, we find a significant gulf between theology and practice in the church. First, we will briefly consider how the questions of hermeneutics, and biblical authority relate to Adventism's theology of Revelation and inspiration, and how these issues have a direct bearing on the subject of sexual equality, then we will turn to the question of ecclesiology in the final section of the paper.

In his now classic work, The Bible and The Role of Women, Rister Stendhal makes the following statement, concerning the nature of inspiration, which Adventists would do well to carefully consider,

Everything in the Bible emanates from the Christ-reality. Thereby its absolute character as revelation is given and articulated. But implied in the fact that the Bible is a testimony to and an interpretation of the Christ event is also the fact that it consists of words of men, contingent upon and determined by historical, sociological, and psychological circumstances. Thus we have in the Bible what is absolute only in and through

what is relative. It is the work of the Spirit to make the word of man<sub>37</sub> in the Bible into God's absolute word for us.

Throughout the nineteenth, and during the early part of the twentieth century, Adventism would have been united in its opposition to such a view of inspiration. They considered all such interpretations to be the heretical distortions of liberalism or modernism. The Bible was considered to be an absolute source of propositional truth by nearly all Adventists, and many church members held to a rigid view of verbal inspiration. However, by the year 1919 there were many significant leaders in the church who were well informed enough to realize that Ellen White's writings were neither verbally inspired nor infallible, as so many church members had come to believe.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, a polarization developed in the church over two closely related issues, 1) is the Bible the sole authority for faith and practice, or is Ellen White an infallible interpreter of scripture? and 2) what is the nature of inspiration both in relationship to Ellen White and the Bible writers?

Today Adventism is still struggling with these questions and the division in the church has even intensified in recent years. Because theology is dependent on one's hermeneutical approach to scripture, these issues have a direct bearing on whether the church will succeed in formulating a theology of liberation or not. The demythologizing of Ellen White's writings, which has

occurred in the last five to ten years, has certainly opened the door to a much broader understanding of inspiration, but unfortunately, like in so many other denominations today, there has been a tendency for the academic community and the general church community to be polarized in their respective approaches to hermeneutics. Many conservative congregations hold to a literal, rigid, propositional, or "proof text" interpretation of scripture. In contrast, most biblical scholars have adopted a historical-critical methodology in their study. The problem with this polarization is expressed by Elizabeth Fiorenza:

The community of faith is generally concerned with contemporary questions of Christian faith and lifestyle, and turns to the Bible in its search for answers and meaning. The historical-critical approach of biblical scholarship, however, underlines the specific historical character of biblical texts. Because it brings out the historically and culturally conditioned, and therefore limited, character of biblical statements, it emphasizes how remote and estranged the scriptures are from the<sub>39</sub> contemporary problems of the Christian community.

Fiorenza suggests a hermeneutical model which, on the one hand, avoids the naive extreme of blind literalism (she calls this the dogmatic paradigm), while on the other hand it avoids the faithless extreme of relating to scripture as if it were nothing more than an ancient historical document (she calls this the historical paradigm). Fiorenza proposes a third model that allows the Bible to be read with both faith and integrity. She refers to this model as the

pastoral theological paradigm. This approach sees scripture as the root model for Christian faith. Revelation exists for the sake of human salvation and liberation. Such a hermeneutical model integrates the best intentions of both the dogmatic and historical paradigms. In this writer's opinion, it provides the best model for developing a theology of sexual liberation within the context of biblical norms, available to the church today.

Adventism has matured considerably from its early Fundamentalist approach to inspiration, and theological issues such as sexual equality in church leadership. No longer is a question like the ordination of women decided by a quotation from Ellen White, or considered from a "proof text" mentality. Today, the church is beginning to recognize the differences between biblical ethics and Christian ethics.<sup>40</sup> Church scholars, and even the General Conference's Official Biblical Research Committee, have unanimously agreed that there is no theological reason to withhold ministerial ordination from women.<sup>41</sup> The climate seems to be ripe in the church for the development of a liberation theology, based on a socio-political hermeneutic,<sup>42</sup> which will not compromise the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Ecclesiology

It is not Biblical scholars, or theologians, in the church who hesitate or refuse to liberate Adventism from restrictive sexist practices. Rather, the barriers to such liberation are to be found in the realm of church polity and ecclesiology. Here again, we find tension, and contradictions, between Adventist profession and practice. On the one hand, the church has proclaimed its firm protestant belief in the priesthood of all believers, while on the other hand, it has refused to acknowledge the ministerial gifts of women. It has traditionally emphasized the importance of individualism through its belief in the inviolability of human conscience, while gradually usurping individual initiative and freedom through authoritarian practices which promote institutional hierarchicalism.<sup>43</sup> And while it is true that the social evolution from sect to denomination, which is to be expected in any religious movement, partially explains this authoritarian trend, there are still sobering questions to consider. For example, why is it that older, larger, and more established churches, which place a premium on institutional structure, like the United Methodists and the United Presbyterians, manage to operate church organizations which are far less hierarchical

and clergy dominated than the Adventist church? The following statistics are revealing.<sup>44</sup>

<u>Organizational Level</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Total</u>
Regional Sessions	SDA	13 (28%)	35 (72%)	48
Electing	UPC	67 (50%)	67 (50%)	134
National Delegates	UMC	946 (61%)	600 (39%)	1546
National Assembly	SDA	66 (26%)	192 (74%)	258
Delegates	UPC	317 (50%)	317 (50%)	634
	UMC	456 (50%)	456 (50%)	912
Selected Standing	SDA	5 ( 4%)	122 (96%)	127
Committees (Combined)	UPC	79 (45%)	96 (55%)	175
	UMC	159 (52%)	149 (48%)	308

If there is a correlation between clericalism and ecclesiastical sexism, as Rosemary Ruether has suggested, then it is not surprising, in light of the above statistics, that Adventists tend to be even more male dominated, than they are clergy dominated. Less than two percent of Adventist seminary students are women compared with approximately forty percent for Protestant seminaries in general.<sup>45</sup> While Methodists, Presbyterians and most other Protestant denominations have been ordaining more women to the ministry each year for the last decade, Adventists have yet to ordain a single female minister. In other words, Adventist ecclesiology needs to provide an impetus for lay liberation, just as desperately as it needs to catch a vision of woman's liberation. For both women, and laity as a whole, suffer from the church's failure to implement its own theology of the "Priesthood of all believers." With

this in mind, let us turn to some possible ecclesiological solutions to the above mentioned problems.

In very recent years, a number of church scholars have contributed to the present discussion over how Adventism can better harmonize its current hierarchical practice with its ecclesiological convictions concerning the Priesthood of all believers. Some form of re-organization of church structure seems to be necessary. Raymond Cottrell has proposed that Union Conferences be abolished and that the North America Division be given an autonomy that would free it from General Conference control.<sup>46</sup> Such a recommendation would increase efficiency, allow the NAD to truly represent the concerns of North America, and permit the General Conference to "become a bona fide international organization."

James Walters and David Larson offer seven "moral presumptions"<sup>47</sup> of democratic church government, which if implemented, would serve to transform the "hierarchical pyramid" of clericalism into an "inverted pyramid" where all believers would participate in decision making, as they were moved by God's Spirit. These include 1) an ethical presumption in favor of widespread participation; 2) a presumption in favor of genuine and effective representation; 3) a presumption in favor of a free and orderly exchange of news and ideas; 4) a presumption in favor of local versus hierarchical initiative and control; 5) a presumption in favor of progress and change versus simple maintenance in

the decision making process; 6) a presumption in favor of protecting and preserving the interests and identity of minorities within the denomination. Such presumptions, fit with George Colvin's argument that the principles of political science must be effectively applied to church government. Colvin too, offers several similar principles for church re-organization.<sup>48</sup>

1. Secular knowledge is applicable to church structures and processes.
2. Dissent, conflict, and criticism are legitimate and necessary parts of the life of the Christian community.
3. Free, accurate communications media are vital for the life of the Christian community.
4. The most desirable church structure is a democratic and participatory one, in which decisions and actions are decentralized.
5. The church should professionalize relevant operational activities.

Until Adventism is willing to take these principles seriously the church will do no more than give "lip service" to its doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and the problem of sexual inequality will remain unsolved. There must be a willingness to search for new ecclesiological models. Presently the church seems to be deeply entrenched in what Avery Dulles calls the institutional model,<sup>49</sup> which is characterized by clericalism, dogmatism, and triumphalism. Other traditional approaches have been employed as well, as the historical-chronological model



(Richard Schwarz), the theological Development Model (Mervyn Maxwell), and the Statistical-Comparative Model (Gottfried Oosterwall). But there are a number of models for change which Adventist ecclesiology has not considered. These include,

1. The Servant Model - Avery Dulles (Essence of Religion = Service to humanity).
2. The Life Cycle Model - Oswald Spengler (Stages = birth, infancy, childhood, etc.).
3. The Challenge-Response Model - Arnold Toynbee (Stages = challenges from environment, other similar organizations, within).
4. The Social Movement Model (Stages = discovery, innovation, diffusion).
5. The Conflict Model - Karl Marx (Stages = thesis, antithesis, synthesis).
6. The Moral Development Model - Kohlberg (Levels = preconventional, conventional, postconventional).
7. The Psycho-Social Model - Erikson (8 stages = trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. doubt, etc.).
8. The Liberation Model - Juan Segundo, Ruether (Liberation of oppressed).
9. The Socio-Political Model - Johannes Metz (Need for a political ecclesiology).

This paper has been particularly concerned with the liberation model as it relates to women in the Adventist church, but no one model is adequate. The more creative the church is in its approach to ecclesiology, the broader its definition of ministry will be, and the more open it will be to developing the full potential of all its members, male and female alike.

### Summary -Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has briefly examined five theological themes in Adventist thought, which seem to have important implications in terms of how the church might better deal with its practice of hierarchialism and sexual inequality, in the context of liberation theology. There are certainly other theological motifs in Adventism which are related to this issue as well, but the five which have been presented, and summarized below, seem to be most prominent in this writer's opinion.

1. Spiritual Gifts: Adventists must re-examine their understanding of the gift of prophecy, so that it will not be unrealistically elevated above the other gifts in a manner that restricts and hinders the church's ability to practice its theology of spiritual gifts. Ellen White must be seen as a uniquely gifted woman who used the talents she was given to God's glory, just as other women in the church may do with their respective gifts if they are properly recognized. The church has traditionally set her too far apart from other women, and all other human beings for that matter, by claiming too much for her, and by claiming too much for what the gift of prophecy entails.

2. Wholism: Adventist theology, in contrast to the traditional theology of the great majority of Christian churches, has always rejected the soul/body dualism of

Greco-Gnostic thought. As Rosemary Ruether and others have pointed out, this hierarchical dualism laid the framework for the anti-body and sexist ideologies contained in Christian thought throughout the ages. Unfortunately, due primarily to sociological and pietistic influences, Adventism has failed to live up to its wholistic theology. It has failed to develop the Hebrew notion of Shalom in terms of its tremendous implications for social justice. Instead it has adopted a hierarchical church structure which conflicts with its own theology. However, the potential in Adventist theology for change in this area is encouraging.

3. Eschatology: Adventist eschatology has traditionally been linked with social pessimism, other worldliness, escapism, isolationism, and suspicion of socio-political movements. However, such a picture of Adventism conflicts with the tremendous medical, educational and other world wide institutional services that the church provides. But it is fair to say that the church has often avoided and discouraged socio-political involvement even when issues of social justice have been at stake. This has been particularly true when one considers the issue of women's right. It is the contention of this paper that Adventist eschatology, like Adventist theology in general, will sensitize the church to issues of social justice, if properly understood, and motivate it to ethical action. Our views of premillennialism, posttribulationism,

Greco-Gnostic thought. As Rosemary Ruether and others have pointed out, this hierarchical dualism laid the framework for the anti-body and sexist ideologies contained in Christian thought throughout the ages. Unfortunately, due primarily to sociological and pietistic influences, Adventism has failed to live up to its wholistic theology. It has failed to develop the Hebrew notion of Shalom in terms of its tremendous implications for social justice. Instead it has adopted a hierarchical church structure which conflicts with its own theology. However, the potential in Adventist theology for change in this area is encouraging.

3. Eschatology: Adventist eschatology has traditionally been linked with social pessimism, other worldliness, escapism, isolationism, and suspicion of socio-political movements. However, such a picture of Adventism conflicts with the tremendous medical, educational and other world wide institutional services that the church provides. But it is fair to say that the church has often avoided and discouraged socio-political involvement even when issues of social justice have been at stake. This has been particularly true when one considers the issue of women's right. It is the contention of this paper that Adventist eschatology, like Adventist theology in general, will sensitize the church to issues of social justice, if properly understood, and motivate it to ethical action. Our views of premillennialism, posttribulationism,

annihilationism, etc. must serve to promote social action rather than inhibiting it.

4. Inspiration: The Adventist church has never fully outgrown the Fundamentalist view of inspiration that it grew up with in the nineteenth century. Fundamentalists had a natural antipathy towards the feminist movement then as they do today. Due to a broader understanding of the nature of inspiration, that has come through Adventism's exposure to higher education, and the application of the historical critical method to both scripture and the writings of Ellen White, the church is now better able to address the issue of sexual equality and to formulate a hermeneutic which will be sensitive to the concerns of Liberation Theology.

5. Ecclesiology: There is a definite contradiction between the strong Protestant emphasis in Adventist theology on the "Priesthood of all believers," and the church's hierarchial subordination of women, and laypersons in general. This subordination of both women and laypersons is not coincidental, but the natural outgrowth of historical clericalism. If Adventism is to be a force for liberation in today's worlds, it must take seriously its professed belief in the Priesthood of all its members, and be willing to consider new models and creative options for the church of the 80's.

Finally, the issue of sexual equality in the church demands the attention of both men and women. It is in a

spirit of partnership that this issue can be addressed without building further barriers between the sexes. To assume that this problem is something that women must sort out for themselves is to encourage irresponsibility on the part of men, and while it is true, as Paulo Freire<sup>50</sup> has pointed out, that ultimately it is the oppressed themselves, who must educate the oppressed to deal with their oppression, such an observation does not provide an excuse for male detachment or non-involvement in this issue. There are many ways that men can offer active support to women who seek sexual equality without going to the extreme of co-optation. It is such a cooperative vision that Adventists need as they seek to deal with the reality of sexism in the church.

# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> J. Milton Yinger, The Scientific Study of Religion (London: The MacMillan Company, 1970), pp. 192-193, 453-454.

<sup>2</sup> Snell Putney and Russel Middleton, "Dimensions and Correlates of Religious Ideologies," Social Forces 39, 1961, pp. 285-290. See also, Gary Maranell, "An Examination of Some Religious and Political Attitude Correlates of Bigotry," Social Forces 45, 1967, pp. 356-363. Charles Glock and Rodney Stark, Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1966). For more recent studies, see V.P. Robinson and P.R. Shaver, Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes (Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan, 1973), pp. 642-662.

<sup>3</sup> Gordon Allport, Personality and Social Encounter (Boston, Mass.: The Beacon Press, 1960), pp. 257-267. Russell Allen and Bernard Spilka, "Committed and Consensual Religion: A Specification of Religion-Prejudice Relationships," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 6, 1967, pp. 191-206. See also, Robinson and Shaver, pp. 697-701, 709-713. Intrinsic beliefs are those which grow out of a concern for meeting human needs and developing relationships. Extrinsic beliefs are related to an external religiosity that is often disconnected from relational considerations.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Schuller, Self Esteem: The New Reformation (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982), pp. 17, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Adam Finnerty, No More Plastic Jesus: Global Justice and Christian Lifestyle (New York: Orbis Books, 1977), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> A number of recent books have addressed the problem of narcissism in contemporary American life and religion. See Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979); Paul Vitz, Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmanns) 1977.

<sup>8</sup> For more information concerning how Adventists have, and do presently, connect the gifts of prophecy with a claim of remnancy, see Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook (1982) pp. 6, 7. and Questions on Doctrine (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), pp. 16, 186 f.

<sup>9</sup> It has only been during the last 5 - 10 years that academics in the church have come to realize that much of the material attributed to Ellen White was not actually written by her. The church membership is still generally ignorant as to the extent of this problem.

<sup>10</sup> Francis Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951), pp. 24-25, 52-53, 558 f.

<sup>11</sup> Ron Graybill, The Power of Prophecy (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1983), p. 173.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed description of the biblical prophet see, Abraham Heschel, The Prophets (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 3-26.

<sup>13</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> See Letha Sconzoni and Nowcy Hardesty, "Wasting the Church's Gifts", All We're Meant to Be (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1975), pp. 169-181. Rosemary Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk (Boston, Mas.: The Beacon Press, 1983), pp. 194-213. See also the following unpublished manuscripts in the Heritage Room of Loma Linda University, Betty Sterling, Full Use of Talents in the Church (1975), Margit Suring, Reflections on the Ordination of Women (1975).

<sup>15</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), p. 94.

<sup>16</sup> See Will Metzger, Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1981); Earl Wilson, The Undivided Self (Downers Grove: IVP, 1983); for a more scholarly approach see John Fenton, ed., Theology and Body (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> Ellen White refers to Adventism's rejection of soul-body dualism as one of the foundational landmark doctrines of the church, see, Counsels to Writers and Editors, a compilation of Ellen White's statements, (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> I Corinthians 6:19

<sup>19</sup> For an example of such an emphasis see, Leo Van Dolson and Robert Spangler, Healthy, Happy, Holy (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), p. 30.



- 20 Carol Ochs, Behind the Sex of God (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1977), pp. 10 ff.
- 21 Rosemary Ruether, New Woman New Earth (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 14.
- 22 Rosemary Ruether, ed., Religion and Sexism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p. 163.
- 23 Ruether, New Woman New Earth, pp. 75, 76. For a whole chapter dealing with the implications of this see Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk, pp. 193-212.
- 24 See Alberta Mazat, That Friday in Eden (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1981), pp. 18-36. See also Sakae Kubo, Theology and Ethics of Sex (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Associations, 1980), and Charles Wittschiede, God Invented Sex (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1974).
- 25 These familiar sociological typologies are described in detail by Ernst Troeltsch, Social Teaching of the Christ Churches, 2 vols., trans. Olive Wyon (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 331 ff, 993 ff. and Max Weber, "The Prophet", Sociology of Religion (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 46 ff, 358 ff.
- 26 For a detailed study of how institutionalization has affected Adventist laity see Charles Teel, Withdrawing Sect, Accommodating Church, Prophesying Remnant (Loma Linda University Heritage Room: Unpublished manuscript, 1980).
- 27 A concise paper that nicely summarizes the views of these four theologians on the subject of sexuality and women is by Fritz Guy, Differently But Equally the Image of God: The Meaning of Womanhood According to Four Contemporary Theologians (Unpublished manuscript presented to Biblical Research Committee of General Conference of SDA's, 1976).
- 28 In addition to the works of Rosemary Ruether and Mary Daly, the following works provide a nice sample of other liberation perspectives which have obvious application to women's issues, see, Charles Birch and John Cobb, The Liberation of Life (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Adam Finnerty, World Citizen (New York: Orbis Books, 1982). Walter Brueggemann, Living Toward a Vision (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976, 1982). William Stringfellow, An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1973, 1979).

Letty Russell, The Future of Partnership (Phila.: Westminster Press, 1979).

29 David Rowe, Thunder and Trumpets: The Millerite Movement and Apocalyptic Thought (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Virginia, 1974), pp. 184, 185.

30 Elmer T. Clark, Small Sects in America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1937), p. 26.

31 For details concerning this paradox in Millerrism, see Wayne Judd, "Millerism and Social Reform: An Historical Paradox", (Unpublished manuscript: Loma Linda University Heritage Room, 1979), p. 3 ff.

32 Teel, Withdrawing Sect, pp. 38-42; and Theobald, p. 2.

33 Edwin Ganstad, Historical Atlas of Religion in America (1962), p. 115.

34 Although there is no written work to credit, the material presented concerning these eschatological themes has in part grown out of discussions with Dave Larsen a teaching colleague of mine.

35 For a full discussion of the Adventist doctrine of mortalism see, Cosmas Rubencamp, Immortality and Seventh-day Adventist Eschatology (Washington, D.C.: PhD dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1968).

36 Jurgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 304-338. See also, The Future of Creation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 109-114.

37 Krister Stendahl, The Bible and The Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 16.

38 For a detailed description of the different views on inspiration that existed at the 1919 Bible Conference, see, "The Inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy" Notes From the 1919 Bible Conference July 30, Aug. 1, 1919, quoted in Spectrum (10:1), pp. 30-51. For a discussion of how the Adventist debate related to the Modernist - Fundamentalist debate between 1885- 1925, see, Steve Daily, How Readest Thou (Loma Linda University: M.A. Thesis, 1982)

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Fiorenza, "For the Sake of Our Salvation," Pastoral Theology and Ministry (Beisswenger and McCarty, ed.) Vol. 4 published by Assoc. Theological Field Ed., 1983, p. 40. For a more detailed view of Fiorenza's hermeneutic, see, In Memory of Her (New York: Crossroad, 1983), pp. 3-36.

<sup>40</sup> Biblical Ethics is a discipline concerned with understanding how the Bible writers addressed ethical issues. Christian ethics is concerned with how we apply biblical and Christian principles, today, as we address modern ethical questions. See Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen, Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life (Minneapolis, Augsburg, Pub. House. 1976).

<sup>41</sup> Biblical Research Committee, "Roles of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church", (unpublished manuscript: Presented at Annual Council, 1973), pp. 8, 16.

<sup>42</sup> For an excellent new book which provides a number of different perspectives, see, Norman Gottwald, Ed., The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics (New York: Orbis Books, 1983).

<sup>43</sup> For an insightful study dealing with the Adventist tension between individualism and community interest, see, James Walters and David Larson "Individual, Community, and Adventist Polity," (unpublished manuscript Loma Linda University Heritage Room, 1978). See also ALden Thompson, "Thus Saith the Lord and the Church: A Study of Authority in Adventism", (Paper presented at West Coast Religion Teachers Conference, April 29, 1978).

<sup>44</sup> Teel, Withdrawing Sect, p. 56 (Appendix I).

<sup>45</sup> Elsie Gibson, "Ecumenism and the Ordination of Women", Cross Currents (Fall, 1978), p. 300.

<sup>46</sup> Raymond Cottrell, Comparative Church Politics (Paper presented to Association of Adventist Forums, May, 1982), pp. 24, 25.

<sup>47</sup> Walters and Larson, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>48</sup> George Colvin, Principles for Church Reorganization (Paper presented to Association of Adventist Forums, May, 1982), pp. 7-12.

<sup>49</sup> Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Image Books, 1978), pp. 39-50. I am also indebted to Ian Chand, a professor of Sociology at Loma Linda University, for some of the proposed models suggested in the paper as well.

<sup>50</sup> Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Trans. by Myra B. Ramos (N.Y.: Herder, 1970).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PRIMARY SOURCES

Books

- Abbot, John C. The Mother At Home; or The Principles of Maternal Duty. Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1833.
- Ashton, James. The Book of Nature. New York: Brother Jonathan Office, 1865.
- Blakey, W. A., ed. American State Papers Bearing on Sunday Legislation. Washington: Religious Liberty Association, 1911.
- Brace, Charles Loring. A History of Humane Progress Under Christianity. New York: A.C. Armstrong and Sons, 1882.
- Bushnell, Horace. The Reform Against Nature. New York: Scribner, 1869.
- Butler, G.I. Valuable Historical Extracts. Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1885.
- Carver, H.E. Mrs. E. G. White's Claims to Divine Inspiration Examined. Marion, IA: Advent and Sabbath Advocate Press, 1877.
- Facts for the Times 4th ed. Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1893.
- Farnham, Eliza. Woman and Her Era 1. New York: A.J. Davis 1864.
- Fitch, Charles. Come Out of Her My People. Rochester: J.V. Himes, 1843.
- Foy, William E. The Christian Experience of William E. Foy, Together with Two Visions He receives in the months of January and February, 1842. Portland: J. and C.H. Pearson, 1845.
- Gage, Matilda. Woman, Church and State. Introduction by Sally Wagner. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1980 reprint from 1893.

- Gove (Nichols), Mary S. Lectures to Ladies on Anatomy and Physiology. Boston: Saxton and Pierce, 1842.
- Graham, Sylvester. Lectures on the Science of Human Life. Boston: Charles Pierce, 1848.
- Hale, Nathan. Freud and the Americans. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Hartley, Florence. The Ladies Book of Etiquette. Boston, G.G. Evans, 1873.
- Hastings, H.L. Will the Old Book Stand. Washington: Review and Herald, 1895.
- Kellog, J.H. Ladies Guide in Health and Disease. Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1891.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Plain Facts for Old and Young. Battle Creek, MI: Health Library Assoc., 1901 Edition.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Social Purity. Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1892.
- Kneeland, George. Commercialized Prostitution in New York. Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1913, 1969.
- Nichols, Thomas. Esoteric Anthropology. Port Chester, NY: T.L. Nichols, 1853.
- Palmer, Phoebe. The Promise of the Father. Boston: Henry V. Degen, 1859.
- Reiss, Ira. Premarital Sexual Standards in America. New York: McMillan, 1960.
- Seligman, Edwin. The Social Evil. New York: Putnam, 1912.
- Smith, Uriah. A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by Seventh-day Adventists. Battle Creek, MI: S.D.A. Publ. Assoc. 1872.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. History of Woman Suffrage. New York: Arno, Reprint, 1969.
- Stowe, Calvin, Origin and History of the Books of the Bible Hartford, CT: Hartford Publ. Co., 1867.

- \_\_\_\_\_. Woman's Bible. Seattle: Coalition Taskforce on Women, 1974, 1983 reprint from 1895.
- \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_. (New York: European Publ., 1895, reprinted, Arno Press 1972.
- Strong, Josiah. Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis. New York: Baker and Taylor Co. 1885.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The New Era, or The Coming Kingdom. New York: Baker and Taylor Co., 1893.
- Thomas, S.L. Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems. New York: Scribner, 1887.
- Wadsworth, Benjamin. The Well-Ordered Family. Boston, Benjamin Elliot Publ., 1712.
- White, Ellen. A Solemn Appeal. Sacramento, CA: Northwestern Publ. Assoc., 1980 reprint of 1871 original.
- White, Ellen. Mind, Character, and Personality: Guidelines To Mental and Spiritual Health. 2 Volumes. Nashville, TN: Southern Publ. Assoc., compiled in 1977.
- White, Ellen G. The Adventist Home. Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1952. (a compilation of Ellen White's statements by the trustees of the White Estate.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. An Appeal to Mothers. The Great Cause of the Physical, Mental, and Moral Ruin of Many Children of Our Time. Battle Creek, MI: SDA Publ. Assoc., 1864.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene. Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1890.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Fundamentals of Christian Education. Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1890, 1923.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Great Controversy. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1888, 1907, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Life Sketches. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Ministry of Healing. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905, 1942.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Patriarchs and Prophets. Washington: Review and Herald, 1890, 1958.



- \_\_\_\_\_. Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church.  
November 30, 1882.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Spiritual Gifts 4 volumes. Battle Creek, MI:  
Seventh-day Adventist Publ. Assoc., 1858, 1860, 1864.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Testimonies to the Church. Volumes 1-9.  
Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 948. (a compilation  
of Ellen White's statements by the trustees of the  
White Estate.)
- White Estate. Critique of Prophetess of Health. Washington:  
Ellen G. White Estate, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Mind, Character, and Personality: Guidelines  
to Mental and Spiritual Health 2 vol. Nashville:  
Southern Publ. Assoc., 1977.
- White, James and Ellen ed. A Solemn Appeal Relative to  
Solitary Vice and the Abuses and Excess of the Marriage  
Relation. Sacramento: Northwestern Publ. Assoc.,  
1980 Reprint of 1870 Edition.
- Willard, Frances. Glimpses of Fifty Years. Boston: G.M.  
Smith & Co., 1889.
- \_\_\_\_\_. My Happy Half-Century. Frances Cook, ed.  
London: War, Lock and Bowden, 1894.
- \_\_\_\_\_. W.C.T.U. Minutes. Volume 1888: pp. 1, 48.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Women in the Pulpit. Boston: D. Lothrop, 1888.
- Wise, Daniel. The Young Lady's Counselor. Boston: G. Lane  
and Scott, 1852.

### Periodicals

- Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald. Volumes 1-102  
(1851-1925) selected articles as listed in footnotes.
- The American Sentinel. Volumes 7-22 (1882-1899) selected  
articles.
- Atlantic Union Gleaner. Volumes 1:1 - 3:4 (1902-1904)  
selected articles.
- Buckham, J.W. "Effeminate Preaching." Christian World  
Pulpit (November 12, 1902).

Butler, Josephine. "Women's Place in the Church." Magazine of Christian Literature. 6 (April 1892):32 ff.

Candee, Helen Churchill. "How Women May Earn a Living." Methodist Review (November 1900) 1004, 1005.

Church Record of the Takoma Park Congregation of Seventh-day Adventists. Takoma Park, Washington, DC: General Conference Archives, August 20, 1904.

"Dancing". Millennial Harbinger 1851: 467, 468, 506.  
Day Star (October 3, 1845) 39.

Greil, Cecil L. "Sex O'Clock in America." Current Opinion 55 (1913) 114 ff.

Hall, Josef. "Has Our Civilization Passed Its Zenith." Signs of the Times 12 (1920) 8-12.

Health Reformer. Volumes 5-12 (1870-1877): selected articles.

Holman, Silena. "The W.C.T.U. and the Temperance Movement." Watchman. Number 22(1908) 343 ff.

Horton, R.F. "Christ and Amusements." Christian World Pulpit (February 24, 1892) 118.

"The Judgement of Women." Review and Herald 27:24 (May 15, 1866) 187.

Lake Union Herald. Volumes 1-5 (1909-1913) selected articles.

"Manliness of the Ministry." The Christian Advocate (March 28, 1924) 388 ff.

"Mission Work Among Women." The Sunday School Times. (August 12, 1905) 443.

Moody Monthly. Volumes 10-26 (1909-1926): selected articles.

Moore, William. "Woman's Sphere and Responsibilities." Millennial Harbinger 3:10 (October 9, 1860) 591.

"The Problem of Religious Life in the City." Methodist Review. (May 1900) 406 ff.

"Race-Track Gambling." Christian Advocate (March 28, 1924)  
389 ff.

Signs of the Times. Volumes 12-52 (1886-1925): selected  
articles.

"The Sphere of Woman's Influence." The Health Reformer  
8 (1873): 254ff.

Stimson, Henry. "Is Woman's Suffrage an Enlightened and  
Justifiable Policy for the State." 67 (April 1910)  
338-346.

Taylor, D.T. "Statistical Study of the Advent Movement."  
World's Crisis (January and February 1860) 75, 77,  
81, 85, 90, 96, 100.

Turnbull, Robert. "Theatrical Amusements." Quarterly  
Christian Spectator 10:4 (1838) 557-572.

White, Ellen. "A Letter from Sister White." South-  
western Union Recorder. 7:25 (June 23, 1908) 1ff.

\_\_\_\_\_. "To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the  
Living God." (Broadside dated January 31, 1849,  
Topsham, Maine) Heritage Room, Loma Linda University  
(LSC).

"Woman's Rights and Duties." Christian Century. (1923)  
923 ff.

#### Unpublished Materials

Andrews, Angeline. Diary of Mrs. Angeline Stevens Andrews".  
Heritage Room, Loma Linda University Library:  
handwritten manuscript, 1859.

Henry, Sarepta. The Diary Bulletin of the General  
Conference. March 7, 1899.

Shaw, Anna Howard. "Women in the Ministry." 1898 Article  
photocopied and available at School of Theology at  
Claremont.

White, Edson. "Personal Correspondence File." Ellen White  
Vault: Loma Linda University.

White, Ellen G. "Personal Correspondence contained in  
Document File." Ellen White Vault Loma Linda Univer-  
sity: Loma Linda, California (selected documents).

White, James. "Personal Correspondence File." Ellen White  
Vault: Loma Linda University.

White, Willie. "Personal Correspondence File." Ellen White  
Vault: Loma Linda University.

## B. SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

- Abell, Aaron. The Urban Impact On American Protestantism 1865-1900. London: Archon, 1962.
- Ahlstrom, Sydney. A Religious History of the American People. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.
- Arthur, David T. Come Out of Babylon: A Study of Millerite Separatism and Denominationalism. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1970.
- Banner, Lois, ed. Clio's Consciousness Raised. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Radical For Women's Rights. Boston: Little Brown, 1980.
- Barker-Benfield, G. V. The Horrors of the Half Known Life. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.
- Beach, John. Notable Women of Spirit. Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1976.
- Behnke, Donna. Created in God's Image. Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Religious Issues in Nineteenth Century Feminism. New York: Whitson, 1982.
- Berg, Barbara. The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, 1800-1860. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Bettmann, Otto. The Good Old Days; They Were Terrible. New York: Random House, 1974.
- Bordin, Ruth. Women and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981.
- Boyer, Paul. Urban Masses and Moral Order in America. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Brownlee, Mary and Elliot. Women in the American Economy. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

- Burstyn, Joan. "Catherine Beecher and the Education of American Women." in Women's Experience in America. New Brunswick: New Brunswick Transaction Inc., 1979.
- Catt, Carrie, and Nettie Schuler. Women's Suffrage and Politics. Seattle University of Washington Press, 1923, 1926, 1970.
- Clark, Norman. Deliver Us From Evil. New York: Norton, 1976.
- Clebsch, William. From Sacred to Profane America. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Clinton, Catherine. The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century. New York: Hill and Wang, 1984.
- Cohn, David. The Good Old Days. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940.
- Cott, Nancy. The Bonds of Womanhood. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Passionlessness," in Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Plead (eds.) A Heritage of Her Own. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.
- Crider, Charles. The Seventh-day Adventist Family: An Empirical Study. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979.
- Cross, Robert. The Church and the City. New York: Bobs-Merril, 1967.
- Cross, Whitney. The Burned Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800 to 1850. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950.
- Dayton, Donald. Discovering an Evangelical Heritage. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.
- Degler, Carl. At Odds: Women and the Family in America From the Revolution to the Present. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Douglas, Ann. The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Knopf, 1977.

- Dubois, Ellen. Feminism and Suffrage. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Earhart, Mary. Frances Willard: From Prayers to Politics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1944.
- Eisenstadt, S. N., ed. Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.
- Epstein, Barbara. The Politics of Domesticity. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.
- Flexner, Eleanor. Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States. New York: Atheneum, 1970.
- Foster, Lawrence. Religion and Sexuality. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Friedman, Jean, and William Shade, edd. Our American Sisters. Toronto: Heath, 1982.
- Gaustad, Edwin, ed. The Rise of Adventism. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Gay, Peter. The Bourgeois Experience, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Gorham, Deborah. The Victorian Girl. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Graybill, Ron. The Power of Prophecy. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1983.
- Greven, Philip. The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child Rearing, Religious Experience, and The Self in Early America. New York: Meridian, 1977.
- Hale, Nathan. Freud and the Americans: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Hall, Carrie. From Hoopskirts to Nudity. Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1938.
- Handy, Robert. A Christian America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

- Hardesty, Nancy. "Minister as Prophet? or as Mother?" Rosemary Keller and Hilah Thomas, in Women in New Worlds Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1981.
- Harper, John. "Be Fruitful and Multiply." Carol Berbin and Mary Norton in Women of America: A History. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.
- Howe, Daniel. "Victorian Culture in America." in his Victorian America. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976.
- Hudson, Winthrop. Religion in America. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973.
- Hymowitz, Carol and Michaela Weissman. A History of Women in America. New York: Bantam, 1978.
- James, Janet Wilson, ed. Women in American Religion. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980.
- Jensen, Richard. The Winning of the Midwest. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Johnson, Claudia. "That Guilty Third Tier: Prostitution in Nineteenth Century American Theaters." in David Howe (ed.) Victorian America. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976.
- Keller, Rosemary, and Hilah Thomas. Women in New Worlds. 2 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981.
- Kennon, Donald. A Knit of Identity: Marriage and Reform in Mid-Victorian America. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland. Ann Arbor, MI: 1981.
- Kleppner, Paul. The Cross of Culture. New York: Free Press, 1970.
- Kraditor, Aileen. The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Eye From the Pedestal. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1968.
- Leavitt, Judith Walzer, ed. Women and Health in America: Historical Readings. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.
- Lewis, I. M. Ecstatic Religion. New York: Penguin, 1971, 1978.



- Magnuson, Norris. Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977.
- Marsden, George. Fundamentalism and American Culture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Marty, Martin. Righteous Empire. New York: Dial Press, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America. New York: Dial Press, 1970.
- McLoughlin, William. Modern Revivalism. New York: Ronald Press, 1959.
- Matthaei, Julie. An Economic History of Women in America. New York: Schocken, 1982.
- Maxwell, Mervyn. Tell It to the World. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1977.
- May, Henry. Protestant Churches and Industrial America. New York: Harper & Row, 1949.
- Mohr, James C. "Abortion in America." in Linda Kerber and Jane Mathews (eds.) Women's America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982: 179-189.
- Nelson, Kathryn Jenson. Late Lindsay, M.D.. Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1963.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. The Kingdom of God in America. Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1956.
- Numbers, Ronald. Prophets of Health: A Study of Ellen White. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.
- Pivar, David. Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952.
- Porterfield, Amanda. Feminine Spirituality in America. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.
- Robinson, Virgil. James White. Washington: Review & Herald Publishing Assoc., 1976.
- Rosen, Ruth. The Lost Sisterhood. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

- Rosenberg, Rosalind. Beyond Separate Spheres. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Ross, Alice. The Feminist Papers. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.
- Rothman, Sheila. Women's Proper Place. New York: Basic, 1978.
- Ruether, Rosemary. New Woman New Earth. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. Religion and Sexism. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Rosemary Zeller, eds. Women and Religion in America. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Eleanor McLaughlin, ed. Women of Spirit. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.
- Ryan, Mary. "A Woman's Awakening," in Janet Wilson James (ed.) Women in American Religion. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980: 89-110.
- Sandeen, Earnest. The Roots of Fundamentalism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Schoepflin, Rennie and Ronald Numbers. "Ministries of Healing: Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen G. White and the Religion of Health," Judith Walzer Leavett (ed.) Women and Health in America. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.
- Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Washington: Review and Herald, 1966.
- Schlesinger, Arthur. Learning How to Behave. New York: McMillan, 1946.
- Schwarz, Richard. Light Bearers to the Remnant. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979.
- Sinclair, Andrew. The Emancipation of the American Woman. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- Smith, Daniel Scott. "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism," in Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Plead (eds.) A Heritage of Her Own. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979: 222-245.

- Spaulding, Arthur. Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists. 4 vols. Washington: Review and Herald, 1962.
- Syme, Eric. A History of SDA Church State Relations in the United States. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1973.
- Tannahill, Ray. Sex in History. New York: Stein and Day, 1980.
- Tentler, Leslie Woodcock. Wage Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-1930. London: Oxford University Press, 1979, 1982.
- Trollope, Francis. Domestic Manners of the Americans. 5th ed. New York: Knopf, 1949.
- Truth, Sojourner, "Ain't I A Woman," in Frances Brentano's Nation Under God: A Religious Patriotic Anthology. New York: Channel, 1967.
- Turner, David. Come Out of Babylon. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1970.
- Tuveson, Ernest. Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.
- Tyler, Alice Felt. Freedom's Ferment. New York: Harper & Row, 1944, 1962.
- Weber, Max. "The Prophet," in his Sociology of Religion. Trans. by Ephraim Fischhoff. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.
- Weinstein, Allen. Freedom and Crisis in American History. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood," in Women and Womanhood in America. Boston: Heath, 1973.
- White, Arthur. Ecstatic Experiences in Early SDA History. Washington: Ellen G. White Estate, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Early Elmshaven Years. Washington: Review and Herald, 1984.
- White, Ellen. Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene. Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1890.

Zikmund, Barbara. "The Struggle for the Right to Preach," in Rosemary Ruether and Rosemary Keller (eds.) Women and Religion in America. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.

### Periodicals

#### Adventist Heritage. Volumes 3-7 (1976-1982), Selected Articles.

Bednarowski, Mary F. "Outside the Mainstream: Women's Religion and Women Religious Leaders in Nineteenth Century America." Journal of the American Academy of Religion. 98:2 (June 1980) 207-231.

Butler, Jonathan. "The World of E.G. White and the End of the World." Spectrum 10:2 (August 1979) 8-10.

Chellis, Eugene. "The Review and Herald and Early Adventist Response to Organized Labor." Spectrum 10:2 (August 1979) 20-30.

Daffern, Jan. "How Long Must Adventist Women Wait?" Spectrum 12:4 (June 1982) 39-43.

Dunn, Mary. "Saints and Sisters." American Quarterly 30 (Winter 1978) 583-601.

Graybill, Ron. "Millenarians and Money." Spectrum 10:2 (August 1979) 31-41.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Footwashing and Fanatics." Insight 4 (January 2, 1973) 9-13.

Hefner Hugh. "The Playboy Philosophy," Playboy 2 (July 1964) 29-39, 111-115.

Hudson, Winthrop. "Shouting Methodists." Encounter 29 (Winter 1968) 73-84.

Morgan, Edmund. "New England Puritanism: Another Approach." William and Mary Quarterly 18 (April, 1961) 236-242.

Numbers, Janet and Ronald. "The Psychological World of Ellen White." Spectrum 14:1 (August 1983) 25 ff.

Shiels, Richard. "The Feminization of American Congregationalism, 1730-1835." American Quarterly 33:1 (Spring 1981): 47-62.

"Zenanas and Girlless Villages: The Ethnology of American Evangelical Women, 1870-1910." Journal of American History 69:2 (September 1982) 347-371.

### Unpublished Materials

Daily, Steven G. "How Readest Thou: The Higher Criticism Debate in Adventism and Protestant America." Unpublished M.A. Thesis:. Loma Linda University, 1982.

General Conference Biblical Research Committee. "Roles of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." A Report prepared for Annual Council, 1973.

Judd, Wayne. "Millerism and Social Reform: A Historical Paradox." Unpublished manuscript, Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library: 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_. "From Ecumanists to Come-onters; the Millerites 1831-1845." Unpublished manuscript. Heritage Room, Loma Linda University, (LSC) library, 1979.

Pellaver, Mary. "The Religious Thought of Three United States Suffrage Leaders." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, December 1980. Microfilm at School of Theology at Claremont Library.

Poehler, Rolf. "And the Door was Shut." Research Paper, Ellen White Research Center: Andrews University Berrien Springs, MI, 1978.

Suring, Margit. "Reflections on the Ordination of Women." Unpublished manuscript: Loma Linda University Heritage Room, 1975.

Theobald, Robin. "The Seventh-day Adventist Movement: A Sociological Study." Ph.D. dissertation photocopied in Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library, 1979.

Teel, Charles. "Bridegroom or Babylon? Dragon or Lamb? Adventists and Nineteenth Century Reform Movements." Unpublished manuscript, Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library: 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Withdrawing Sect, Accomodating Church, Prophesying Remnant." Unpublished manuscript, Heritage Room, Loma Linda University (LSC) Library: 1980.